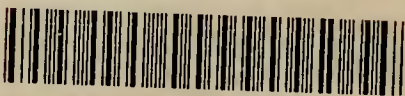


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FRIEDRICH VON GENTZ

Defender of the Old Order



FRIEDRICH VON GENTZ

From a reproduction of a portrait by Thomas Lawrence published in Österreichische Kunstschatze, edited by Wilhelm Suida (Vienna, 1914).

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FRIEDRICH VON GENTZ

Defender of the Old Order

by
PAUL R. SWEET



Madison • Wisconsin
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To my father
WILLIAM WARREN SWEET

Preface

IN SPITE of the vogue that biography has enjoyed for a good many years, few lives of Germans, except of those who by position or accomplishment enjoy the most obvious eminence, are available to the English-reading public. Yet it is generally admitted that the lives of personages of the second rank may frequently be quite as instructive and as interesting as those of men who have won greater acclaim. Friedrich von Gentz, it need scarcely be said, cannot be numbered among the most famous or most important figures in the history of Germany or Austria; but if his biography is neither instructive nor interesting, it is the fault of his biographer.

Gentz was not only an engaging man personally; he was also a man of historical consequence. Reared in the tradition of the eighteenth-century Prussian bureaucracy, he early displayed a highly unbureaucratic initiative and independence. He was first recognized for his translation of Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution*, and after taking up the conservative argument on a tangent of his own, he soon acquired a European reputation as the most gifted anti-Revolutionary and anti-Bonapartist writer in Germany. The development of a political correspondence of continental proportions paved the way for his removal to Vienna in 1802, where he eventually became the most intimate co-worker of Metternich. He was a prominent and significant figure at the Congress of Vienna and at all subsequent European congresses during his lifetime. He became the most eloquent exponent of the Conservative system. Of his generation there was no German in public affairs who expressed himself more prolifically or more lucidly on the issues of the day, and his letters, dispatches, and memoirs have long been regarded by historians as highly important sources for the history of his time. In the first three volumes of Alfred Stern's monumental *Geschichte Europas*, for example, Gentz's name appears more frequently than that of any other person save Metternich and Czar Alexander.

It would be easy to write a sharply critical biography of Gentz, for his course often deviated from the straight and narrow path. I have wanted neither to condemn Gentz nor to apologize for him. I have selected the facts of his life as fairly as I could and have presented as complete a pic-

ture as space would permit. After living closely with Gentz for several years I must admit that I have found his opinions ingratiatingly reasonable, even when I could not agree with them; and I like him.

There have been three full-length biographies of Gentz, but the most recent, that by Guglia, was written nearly forty years ago. A wealth of pertinent documentary and monographic literature has since been published. Among these publications the writings of the Wittichen brothers and of August Fournier are of primary importance, and every Gentz student must always regret that death removed these men, one by one, before they could bring to completion definitive biographies. In comparatively recent years many scholars, by supplementing the work of Fournier and the Wittichens, have performed indispensable service in rounding out the Gentz picture. Though I have made use of unpublished materials at Vienna, Berlin, and London, I must still acknowledge that the present volume would have been impossible had it not been for the labors of others.

In the search for materials and in the preparation of the manuscript I have met with unfailing kindness, not only from my friends but from people I had never seen before. I am particularly grateful to two archive officials, Dr. J. K. Mayr of Vienna and Dr. C. S. B. Buckland of London, who, as authorities on Gentz, could give me expert assistance. I wish also to acknowledge the generosity of Mr. André de Coppet of New York, who allowed me to see his extraordinary collection of books and manuscripts, and the helpfulness of Miss Emily Driscoll, curator of the collection.

To Professors Chester P. Higby and Chester V. Easum of the University of Wisconsin, who have seen this book in its different stages, I owe a real debt of gratitude for constant interest and encouragement. I have also benefited greatly from the helpful suggestions of Professor Louis R. Gottschalk of the University of Chicago, who read the entire manuscript, Dr. Harold T. Parker of Duke University, who read most of it, and Dr. Harold C. Vedeler of the University of Idaho, Southern Branch, and Dr. Peter A. Bertocci of Bates College, who read single chapters. Most of all I wish to thank my wife for her countless services.

PAUL R. SWEET

Bates College
August, 1941

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YOUTH AND EARLY LIFE
1764-1797

I. The Burgher

THE YEAR 1763 marks the end of an epoch in the history of Prussia. For nearly a quarter of a century Silesia had been the touchstone of Prussia's potentialities as a great power. The Seven Years' War had decided the fate of the province, and its transfer to the Hohenzollerns was now definite, seemingly irrevocable. A great task of rehabilitation and reconstruction lay ahead. This task, diligently performed, gave direction to the last twenty-three years of Frederick the Great's paternal despotism.

These years are eminently germane to our story, for they are the years of Friedrich Gentz's boyhood, youth, and early manhood. Gentz was born on May 2, 1764, at Breslau, and was to be, someone later sneered, Prussia's indemnification to Austria for the theft of Silesia.¹ The boy must have become aware, vaguely, of the machinery of Frederickian statecraft almost as soon as he became aware of anything at all, for he grew up in the royal mint. His father held the position of *Münzmeister*, and the family, according to the custom of the day, occupied rooms at the father's place of business.

The Gentzes were newcomers to Silesia. The father, Johann Friedrich Gentze (so he spelled his name),² was a native of Baerwalde in the Neumark, a portion of the old Mark Brandenburg lying east of the Oder River. The son of a petty official, he had received a university education (at Frankfurt on the Oder), and in 1750 had entered the service of the king. He was first employed in Berlin, was delegated to headquarters during the war, and in 1762 was transferred, because of illness, to the Breslau mint. The next year he married Elisabeth Ancillon of Berlin. Elisabeth Ancillon came from a highly respected Huguenot family; her uncle, a prominent theologian, was commonly regarded as the leader of the important French colony in Berlin.

¹ *D'Ulm à Iéna; correspondance inédite du chevalier de Gentz avec Francis James Jackson, ministre de la Grande-Bretagne à Berlin, 1804-1806*, edited by Maurice Henri Weil (Paris, 1921), 229.

² Friedrich Gentz kept this spelling until about 1788.

The Gentzes lived in Breslau until 1779. The father prospered, rising to the position of director of the mint in 1777. After Friedrich four more children were born: Heinrich and Ludwig, Florentine and Lisette. Very little is known about any of the children during the Breslau years. Of Friedrich's "teething and swaddling adventures, of his scoldings, squallings, pukings, purgings," no gossip told the tale; and he himself put no reveries to paper, so far as posterity has been able to discover. He appears to have attended the so-called *Stadtschule* and then the *Magdalenen Gymnasium*. In later years he invariably spoke of his parents with affection and respect, and one infers that life in the Gentz family followed the best middle-class tradition of eighteenth-century Germany. The family friends in Breslau, as in Berlin later, were intellectually alert: it is a fact of significance that as a boy Friedrich lived in an environment in which bureaucratic veneration for the state was tempered by contact with the rationalistic *Aufklärung*. The great dramatist Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, his brother Karl Gotthelf, and the popular philosopher Christian Garve were among those who were in and out of the Gentz home during Friedrich's boyhood; and the close friendship with Garve, particularly, was continued when the elder Gentz, in 1779, became general director of the mint in Berlin and moved his family to the capital.³

The move to Berlin represented a decided promotion for Johann Friedrich Gentz. His salary was increased from nine hundred to two thousand *Reichsthaler*, a comfortable income. The family again resided at the mint, and the boys continued their education in the outstanding secondary school in Brandenburg, the Joachimsthal Gymnasium.

For the next twenty-three years Berlin was to be the home of Friedrich Gentz. This Hohenzollern *Hauptstadt* of about one hundred and forty thousand inhabitants was described by the well-traveled George Forster in 1779 as "one of the handsomest cities in Europe."⁴ The Tiergarten still marked the western fringe of the town. Near by in the Wilhelmstrasse fashionable people were erecting those fine and spacious homes that later generations were to transform into governmental

³ I have found particularly useful on the Breslau period Friedrich Freiherr von Schroetter, *Das preussische Münzwesen im achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (6 vols., Berlin, 1904-11), vols. 2 and 3; and Adolph Doebber, *Heinrich Gentz, ein Berliner Baumeister um 1800* (Berlin, 1916). Through the courtesy of Herr Stadtrat Neumann of Breslau I have seen transcripts of the following letters relating to the move to Berlin: Schulenburg to Hoym, June 28, 1779; J. F. Gentz to Hoym, Berlin, July 13, 1779; Hoym to J. F. Gentz, July 16, 1779, all in the Staatsarchiv, Breslau, Acta von Münzoffizianten.

⁴ Karl Bruhns, ed., *Life of Alexander von Humboldt*, 1:36 (London, 1873).

offices and official residences for Bismarcks, Hindenburgs, and Hitlers. South of Unter den Linden the twentieth-century wayfarer may still see certain landmarks, such as the French church, which because of his Ancillon connections must have been particularly familiar to young Friedrich Gentz; but beyond the Potsdamer Platz, as one penetrates today the endless monotony of tenemented Schöneberg, it is difficult to imagine the rustic aspect that the suburb still retained in the latter eighteenth century.

This Berlin was an administrative rather than a commercial center; more than a third of the population was connected with the army, the bureaucracy, or the court, and another tenth, said Mirabeau, was so poor that it had to be supported by the state. In such an environment the middle class was probably held back more than elsewhere in Germany;⁵ but within the relatively small circle of Berlin's educated bourgeoisie the Gentz family found itself very much at home. It was a circle recruited chiefly from the colleagues of the father and the Huguenot friends of the mother. The French colony of Berlin numbered about five thousand, and since the colony enjoyed unusual prestige under Frederick the Great, it was an advantage to have a foot in this camp as well as in that of the bureaucracy.

The ways of life of the two groups were more similar than one might suspect. The bourgeoisie as a class were modest, honest, and industrious folk who frowned upon the aristocracy's indolent, unprincipled way of life. The Huguenots in many places set a similarly high standard of personal integrity.⁶ This background had a decided effect upon Gentz. Indeed, the marks which were stamped on young Friedrich at this time remained always upon him, although hard to detect in his blasé middle age. Throughout all the vagaries of his checkered career there was manifest a basic evangelical strain.⁷

Moral earnestness and capabilities fairly well disciplined marked the youth of nineteen who set out in 1783 for the Königsberg university to complete studies preparatory for the civil service. The artist Daniel Chodowiecki, who ten years before had journeyed over much the same ground, left a pictorial record of flat new-looking country, bottomless

⁵ On this point see Paul Wittichen, "Zur inneren Geschichte Preussens während der französischen Revolution: Gentz und Humboldt," in *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte*, 19 (1906):2; W. H. Bruford, *Germany in the Eighteenth Century: The Social Background of the Literary Revival* (New York, 1935), 50; G. Freytag, *Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit*, 4:316 (Leipzig, 1900).

⁶ Bruford, *Germany in the Eighteenth Century*, 227.

⁷ Kurt Groba, "Friedrich von Gentz," in *Schlesische Lebensbilder*, 2:152 (Breslau, 1926).

roads bordered by recently planted trees, primitive inns smelling of the stable, and an occasional mansion with great high-ceilinged rooms and long-backed chairs lined primly around the walls. What young Friedrich thought of the scenes that unfolded before him is not known. His parents were full of concern, for his genial listlessness had sometimes roused doubts about his future. His teachers at the gymnasium, however, had graduated him *primus omnium*, and the chances were certainly fair that he would acquit himself well at the university.⁸

In 1783 the university of Königsberg was one of the foremost German institutions of learning; but the shacklike buildings which it occupied among Königsberg's tightly packed, tall houses gave the casual passerby no hint of pre-eminence or munificence. The fleeting prestige of the university derived largely from the presence on the faculty of Immanuel Kant, who two years before had published his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant, indeed, was the man who had attracted young Gentz to Königsberg. Some time previously, on a business trip to East Prussia, Friedrich's father had made the acquaintance of Kant and had decided then and there that his son must study under the great philosopher. In a letter full of paternal love Johann Gentz had accordingly entrusted his son to the particular care of Kant. Moses Mendelssohn, the great Jewish philosopher, had also written from Berlin in Friedrich's behalf. Since the university had only a few hundred students, genius was expected to take a personal interest in a boy, not yet twenty, who was beginning a venture with the higher learning.⁹

The spare little bachelor-philosopher did in fact take great interest in the young scholars. Inured to a frugal way of life, nearing sixty, but just entering upon the decade of his greatest literary activity, Kant moved with a certain benign punctuality through his small academic world. At dinner came his great diversion, for then, with one or two young friends hanging on his words, he was wont to prolong the conversation leisurely until three or four o'clock in the afternoon. Friedrich Gentz gained immediate entree to this charmed circle,¹⁰ and the rapid ripening of his talent in the stimulating atmosphere of the university

⁸ W. von Oettingen, ed., *Von Berlin nach Danzig: Eine Künstlerfahrt im Jahre 1773 von Daniel Chodowiecki* (Leipzig, 1937); Paul Reiff, *Friedrich Gentz, an Opponent of the French Revolution and Napoleon* (Urbana, 1912), 23; Doeber, *Heinrich Gentz*, 3.

⁹ Friedrich Paulsen, *Immanuel Kant* (New York, 1902), 25, 57; *Briefe von und an Friedrich Gentz*, edited by Friedrich C. Wittichen and Ernst Salzer (3 vols. in 4, Munich and Berlin, 1909-13), 1:138-139. This is cited hereafter as *Briefe von und an Gentz*.

¹⁰ In 1790 Kant recommended Kiesewetter to Gentz particularly, and later in the year Gentz did the second proofreading for Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft*. *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:155, 182.

soon enabled him to feel at home. Intellectually aroused, he read many books, including, of course, those of the master: "I have plumbed the depths of his transcendental idealism," he announced solemnly at the age of twenty.

In the lives of many persons the university years mark a break with the mental and moral patterns formed under the parental roof. The university often fosters a free and easy individualism altogether different from the conventions of middle-class existence, and this in spite of the fact that the modern university derives largely from the middle class. Between the intellectual, on the one hand, and the butcher, banker, and baker, on the other, lies a chasm. In the Königsberg of Friedrich Gentz's day there was little to make the awareness of such a chasm too acute. Gentz's training at the university was a culmination, a completion, of his Huguenot-burgher upbringing, and fitted him for plodding the path his father had trod. That he did not do so must be ascribed to other influences, influences that began to operate upon him powerfully only after he had left the university. Yet even as a youth he had a predilection not for Immanuel Kant of the categorical imperative, but for Christian Garve, whose teaching was "of the necessity for association with the most genteel circles."¹¹

In his last months at Königsberg Gentz had been cultivating the more genteel circles; and before he left, in April, 1785, without taking a degree, he was engaged to be married. With this love affair biographical sources become abundant, and Friedrich Gentz stands forth a creature of flesh and blood.

His fiancée he had met through one of his Königsberg hostesses, Elisabeth Graun, a beautiful and spirited young woman of twenty-four. She was married and unhappy. Later divorced, she was to wed an able and unexciting man named F. A. Stägemann. In her house young men who knew how to talk liked to gather. There was a certain LeNoble, who enjoyed particular favor with the hostess; there was Stägemann waiting stolid attendance with more hope than faith; and there was also Friedrich Gentz, feeling very much at home and perfecting the parlor technique that later fascinated the most seasoned veterans of European salon life, such women as Germaine de Staël, Rahel Varnhagen, and Lori Fuchs.

Between Gentz and Elisabeth Graun sprang up a close friendship that was completely fine and singularly disinterested, at least at the be-

¹¹ Werner Milch, "Christian Garve," in *Schlesische Lebensbilder*, 2:63; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:139-142.

ginning. One can be reasonably sure of this because Elisabeth Graun encouraged Gentz in the pursuit of one of her friends, a certain Coelestine Schwinck. From Coelestine Schwinck Gentz was to learn about the fickleness of women and, more important, something about himself. With Coelestine faded the burgher in him; there emerged an erratic, brilliant egotist with a greater capacity for loyalty to ideas than to people.

Coelestine was the daughter of a prosperous Königsberg businessman, and Friedrich Gentz, without immediate prospects of a substantial income, was a none too attractive match; but with only a few short weeks left to him in Königsberg, the ardent lover wanted the matter settled. It was an age when every emotional experience was squeezed for all that was in it, and Gentz remembered vividly for a long time how, when he came for his answer at five in the evening, he had found Coelestine and Elisabeth together at the window, and how in searching fear he had rushed to Elisabeth, and how he had wept, and she had wept, and Coelestine had wept, until finally he learned that the answer was yes! "Oh, Gott!" he exclaimed later, "What a time that was!"

Then all too soon the golden last days at the university were over, and the time was at hand for his return to Berlin. With tender regret Gentz wrote: "Men are like children: when first they meet, one goes in one corner, one in another; they peek at each other cautiously, distrust themselves, fear each other, until eight o'clock comes; then they edge toward each other little by little, begin to play, and just as they come to the feast or to the little wedding, Mamma calls: 'Dorchen, Fritzchen, we are going.' They stand there, look at each other — and weep. I find this comparison so unusually exact — so pointed — that I myself begin to weep over it."¹²

When the time came, however, Gentz set out manfully enough for Berlin. There followed then, over a period of two years, a series of letters to Elisabeth Graun, letters which in their candor and directness of style reveal the man who was to take hold of the German language and fashion it into a beautiful instrument through which his sharp and orderly mind could find expression. They were letters which Elisabeth treasured, and late in life partially embodied in a fictionalized autobiography entitled *Erinnerungen für edle Frauen*.

Gentz's first letters to Elisabeth convey the impression of an exemplary lad who had walked down streets of a certain kind with his eyes straight before him. His elders had quite evidently told him that life was a serious business. The prospect of a prosy, humdrum career in the

¹² *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:19, 72.

Prussian civil service did not appall him in the least: he was no fanciful idealist with visions of remaking the world. His eyes were set on a conventional and concrete objective: a home of his own with a good substantial German wife who would appreciate the meaning of domestic bliss. "All my present doings relate in one way or another to the goal for which I aim," he wrote in June, 1785. And in August: "I have made a few sound steps toward my goal. I am now *Herr Geheimer Sekretär*, have a couple of hundred thaler as salary, and hope for more soon."¹³ As for the beautiful "Mamsell" Junge, the learned "Mamsell" Beguelin, the talented "Mamsell" Raehmeln, they were nothing to him but clothes-horses. Months later he wrote: "I have never been traitor to virtue: I love Coelestine as on the day of my departure." Convinced of his seriousness, his worthy father offered to make it financially possible for him to marry, and at a much earlier age than was customary for one in his position. A truly fine prospect it was with eight hundred thaler a year in sight with which to start. A few years later Schiller, with a wife and growing children, could write: "With eight hundred dollars I can live here, in Jena, charmingly."¹⁴

At this stage, then, Gentz seems to have been a young man of admirable constancy and dependability. He was also something of a pedant; his high moral purpose had led him to devour a number of weighty tomes. His intellectual discrimination, however, was still undeveloped: he could expound another man's ideas with considerable cogency, but he did not evaluate them. Elisabeth, although older than he and interested in serious things, was largely unread in the important books of the time. Gentz, assuming solemnly and naïvely the role of schoolmaster, brought the weight of contemporary wisdom to bear on his fair correspondent's problems. Did she wonder about the reality of virtue and immortality? Gentz could philosophize on such subjects à la Kant and did so: "Be good . . . because you ought to be good," he pontificated with fine assurance. But two months later all the Kantian "oughtness" imperceptibly lost its iron, and under the insinuating influence of Rousseau he wrote with equal assurance: "The enjoyment of life is so cheap, so natural . . . if we remain true to nature. . . . Let us feel and happily enjoy every instant of relaxation, every quiet min-

¹³ He had been placed with the Seehandlung, a commercial bank subordinate to the General Directory, which later became the Preussische Staatsbank. See Ernst Müller and Ernst Posner, *Übersicht über die Bestände des geheimen Staatsarchivs zu Berlin-Dahlem* 1:148 (Leipzig, 1934); Walter L. Dorn, "The Prussian Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century," in the *Political Science Quarterly*, 47 (1932):82, note; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:49.

¹⁴ Quoted by G. H. Lewes in *The Life and Works of Goethe*, 1:334 (Boston, 1856).

ute.”¹⁵ Before he was through he was discoursing on how Elisabeth should educate her children, and with as much conviction as though he had written *Emile* himself. Receptive his life long to the major intellectual influences of his generation, Gentz showed this first year after his departure from Königsberg the increasing ascendancy of Rousseau over Kant.¹⁶

In the fall of 1786, after an absence of nearly a year and a half, Gentz again journeyed to East Prussia for the announcement of his engagement. Shortly after his arrival Coelestine broke with him entirely. So, he learned, does honesty and fidelity receive its reward. With self-righteous bitterness he proclaimed that his belief in “truth, morality, and human goodness” was shattered. Time passed. He returned to Berlin, writing as before to Elisabeth Graun. Caught up once more in the routine of daily work, he was finally able to survey his experience coolly; he realized then that the object he had idolized was composed of very common clay. Gradually a fact established itself in his mind which he had never quite faced before. The person whom he really loved was Elisabeth Graun! “Had you been always at my side, long ago before I knew you,” he cried to her, “then I should have been spared the humiliation of loving a girl who wasn’t worth it.” And again: “You alone, you, you ought to have been the guardian angel of my life. . . . You alone could nourish and strengthen my finest feelings; you alone could realize my moral ideas, could call to life and hold my heartfelt love of virtue. . . . I shall never be happy.” But with her he could “go weeping through life, without happiness in the usual sense of the word, and . . . not grieve for having lived.”¹⁷

On this note, with this tribute, to a woman in Königsberg, East Prussia, died the Huguenot-burgher in Friedrich Gentz.

¹⁵ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:58, 70, 71.

¹⁶ See E. Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Friedrich Gentz: Eine Biographie* (2 vols., Prague, 1859), 1:145.

¹⁷ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:98–101.

2. The Reluctant Bureaucrat

FRIEDRICH GENTZ'S first year in the service of the Prussian state was the last year of Frederick the Great's reign. On the surface the outlook was reasonably calm, but beneath the surface the Revolution was quickening. Among the many people who must shoulder a portion of the responsibility for the revolutionary stirring was none other than King Frederick himself. He had stood in Prussia for a policy that sought to align itself with the Enlightenment, the more advanced thinking of the age; and the failure of the Bourbons to attempt a similar program led intelligent Frenchmen to seek relief from some political authority other than the Crown.¹

Actually, however, Frederick's early desire to align himself with the Enlightenment was only partially realizable, and as he grew older his aims diverged increasingly from those of the Enlightenment. Certainly between a policy that considers man primarily in terms of the state and a policy that considers man primarily in terms of man lies a world of difference. Once upon a time Frederick had been pleased to think of himself as the first servant of the people, but years of dealing *with* the people had engendered only contempt for them, and his continual concern for the state had deadened his feeling for individuals. The German Enlightenment, in spite of the fact that it generally shied clear of drawing political arguments to logical conclusions, did emphasize the rights as well as the duties of men. "Let someone come forth in Berlin and raise his voice for the rights of subjects . . . and you will soon see which is the most slavish land in Europe," declared Lessing,² in a state-

¹ This interpretation, incidentally, would not have satisfied Gentz, at least not the Gentz of 1801, who argued that the developments in France before 1789 did not differ essentially from those in countries under enlightened despotisms. The Revolutionary events, he declared, "gingen keinesweges aus dem Übermass des Übels, sondern aus der Übertreibung und Übereilung des Guten hervor." Gentz, *Von dem politischen Zustande von Europa vor und nach der französischen Revolution* (Berlin, 1801), 85.

² Quoted by K. Th. Heigel, in his *Deutsche Geschichte vom Tode Friedrichs d. Gr. bis zur Auflösung des alten Reiches* (2 vols., Stuttgart, 1899), 1:10.

ment which shows the nature of the conflict that was usually concealed by the surface calm. The surface calm was made possible by the fact that at one point the Frederickian spirit and that of the Enlightenment approached each other so closely that they seemed to fuse. Both recognized man's dignity to be based upon the autonomy of the moral will, and all morality upon the duty of serving humanity socially and politically.³ Thus when the accent fell on duties the Enlighteners seemed close to Frederick; but when it fell on rights the situation was different.

It is clear, then, that one must not equate the principles of the Enlightenment with those of Frederickian despotism. The distinction is important, for although neither policy held the foreground in the new reign of Frederick William II, which opened in 1786, each claimed a following, particularly among members of the middle class. Young Gentz subscribed to both, but at this period he was *aufgeklärt* rather than Frederickian in his spirit.

The prevailing temper of the new reign influenced Gentz as much as that of the old. By a curious coincidence Gentz's break with Coelestine Schwinck came just when Frederick William II ascended the throne; the transformation in Gentz induced by his own unfortunate experience reflected up to a certain point a similar transformation that was taking place in the general tone of Berlin life. In his ideas, to be sure, Gentz remained a product of the Frederickian era, but in his way of life he became a first-rate exemplifier of the post-Frederickian decade.

During the last gray weeks of Frederick and the first lush weeks of Frederick William II, Berlin was subjected to critical observation by the notorious and later celebrated Count Mirabeau. His *Histoire secrète de la cour de Berlin* describes this interesting transition period in a series of fleshy word-pictures which, transferred to canvas, would fittingly adorn the walls of an old-time saloon. Mirabeau's scandalous description was immediately printed and read avidly by thousands within and without Germany. Though subsequent evidence subdued the details of the picture, its broad outlines remained essentially the same. The well-meaning king had polygamous instincts which he was too weak to control, and his simple religious nature made him an easy mark for pious scoundrels. With a fine assortment of "mesmerists, magicians, cabalists, Swedenborgians, Illuminati, Crucified Nuns, Devils of Loudun . . . , Vampires, Sylphs, Rosicrucians, Freemasons, and Etcetera"

³ Wilhelm Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 3:135 (Berlin and Leipzig, 1927). See also Adrien Robinet de Cléry, *Les Idées politiques de Frédéric de Gentz* (Lausanne, 1917), 36, 37.

to choose from, the king gave the nod to the Rosicrucians, a secret order with a leaning toward spiritualism and alchemy. The obscurantism of a Woellner replaced the favored deism of the Enlighteners, and Rosicrucian brethren ran the state, although a few Frederickian souls, like Hertzberg in the foreign office, managed to hang on precariously for a few years.⁴ For more than a decade corruption in public life, licentiousness in private life, and a constantly increasing religious obscurantism held sway in Prussia; and Enlightenment-bred Friedrich Gentz felt the impact of each and successfully resisted none. He was an impressionable and receptive young man, and he had some wild oats ready for the sowing.

As a rule the Prussians of Gentz's class were not inclined to be amenable to the ways of the court, except in such externals as manners and dress.⁵ With regard to morality, and especially sexual morality, the educated bourgeoisie had its own ideas, and it held those ideas tenaciously. Eventually, in the nineteenth century, not only the code of the middle class but its manners and dress came to be accepted, even by the aristocracy. Friedrich Gentz, however, had not the middle-class outlook of his time. The ways of the nobility exercised a powerful fascination over him, and he soon displayed the utmost disdain for many typically bourgeois shibboleths.

Also contributing to the change in Gentz's way of life was the uninspiring character of his work. An official report of the year 1786 stated that "with additional industry and application" he *might* become a useful public servant. The implication here is that even at first, when he was new to the job, confident of rapid advancement, and anxious above all to establish himself for what he thought was a forthcoming marriage, his tasks failed to arouse any wholehearted enthusiasm in him. Shifted from the Prussian commercial bank, the Seehandlung, to the provincial chamber of Brandenburg, and in 1787, upon his own request, to the Brandenburg department of the General Directory, he encountered only work that palled on him. Stacked high on every side were reports dealing with taxation, with budgetary information, with statistics—dull stuff that day after day must be leafed through, copied, and recopied.⁶

⁴ George P. Gooch, *Germany and the French Revolution* (2d ed., London, 1927), ch. 16; G. H. Riquetti, Comte de Mirabeau, *Secret Memoirs of the Court of Berlin* (New York and Akron, 1901).

⁵ Bruford, *Germany in the Eighteenth Century*, 269.

⁶ Paul Bailleu, "Zur Verabschiedung des Kriegsrats Gentz, 1802," in *Festschrift zu Gustav Schmollers 70. Geburtstag* (Leipzig, 1908), 237, 238.

Originally created as the supreme administrative agency in Prussia, the General Directory had been pared of much of its power by Frederick the Great; but its three regional departments, exercising identical functions in their respective areas and with a minister at the head of each, still discharged an important residue of business. Gentz spent six stale years in the Brandenburg department so loaded with "servile and mechanical" work that he had no time even to read a newspaper. The long apprenticeship was the more onerous to him because he despised Voss, who became minister in 1789 and headed the Brandenburg department. "The meanest and stingiest of all those who ever bore the title of minister," Voss, according to Gentz, treated his underlings like machines and threatened to smother all the vibrant energy of his critical subordinate, who wanted to be something more than a cog in the machine of state. So disgruntled did Gentz become that even his father, who had no patience with instability, felt that his son was being grossly maltreated and exerted himself to get him transferred to the Breslau magistracy. The effort came to naught, and Gentz continued his everlasting round of writing.⁷

To relieve the boredom he sought release in extravagant behavior. He was and remained, however, too much the burgher, too much the Kantian, to find satisfaction in joys of the flesh as ends in themselves. Real remorse, a little theatrical, it is true, but remorse nonetheless, is apparent in the letter he wrote to Elisabeth after five weeks of illness-induced contemplation. "What am I — Gott! — what have I been for a long time," he lamented. "How unworthy of you! How unworthy of myself! With a shameful forgetfulness of my finest feelings, with an unpardonable neglect of my finest talents, with a complete confusion of my senses, in a deathlike sleep of all *active* mental powers, I have reeled for almost a year through every foolishness of this abominable world; I have rolled myself around in its unsavory joys, I have sought restless pleasure at the sacrifice of all my contentedness. . . . I have fallen out with myself even to the point of becoming quite strange to myself. Finally, after a hundred vain attempts, after a thousandfold anxious struggle to achieve for myself one day of happiness, I have rediscovered all at once in a single horrible, but divine, hour the old truth which I have always known: that all striving after good fortune is to no purpose without virtue, ease of conscience, and peace and quietude of heart."⁸

⁷ Dorn, "Prussian Bureaucracy," in the *Political Science Quarterly*, 47:75-89; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:154, 171, 190-196.

⁸ *Ibid.*, III.

In this characteristic passage, Gentz reveals himself, just as he was to reveal himself his life long. Though he thought always that he knew what he wanted, he was in reality divided against himself. Until 1786 there had been no conflict. Through the spectacles borrowed from his father and polished by Professor Kant, he had looked out upon his good bourgeois world, and everything had seemed to focus wonderfully. Then one fine day he caught sight of a world that seemed beyond good and evil, the glittering world of the eighteenth-century aristocracy. Torn betwixt the two, Gentz epitomized the conflict between the burgher and aristocratic points of view. Keenly responsive to every intellectual stimulus, eclectic by nature, he mirrored in his own personality, and mirrored with rare completeness, the basic social conflict of his age. When later he glorified rational equilibrium, the golden mean, he was but signaling his own inability to integrate himself.

Late in 1789, however, Gentz felt able to choose. He determined to be a virtuous burgher, a dutiful bureaucrat. To this end he riveted his attention on elevating subjects. Realizing his dependence upon the proper associates, realizing the necessity, to use his own words, of having "before my eyes a model who will often and vividly remind me that the venerable and excellent principles of morality can not only be coolly admired but also carried out," he cultivated a correspondence with Christian Garve, the family friend of Breslau; he sought out stimulating and wholesome companions in Berlin; and he occupied himself assiduously with the larger political questions and with intellectual interests generally.

Christian Garve was more than twenty years older than Gentz, but the two men had much to draw them together. As a Königsberg student, Gentz had been more attracted by the utilitarian spirit of Garve's writings than by the speculative genius of Kant. Garve was neither original nor profound, but he wrote clear prose and kept his writing within the sphere of the obviously practical. In Garve Gentz could see a mature development of the very intellectual qualities that he fervidly desired.⁹

It would be a mistake to infer, however, that in 1789 Gentz's affection for Kantian ways of thinking had been entirely alienated by the attraction of Garve's realistic and matter-of-fact approach. On the contrary, he had not yet overcome the academic-speculative propensities that

⁹ *Ibid.*, 144. Gentz's letters to Garve are interesting documents in themselves, but they are of especial importance in that they provide the only reasonably full record of his attitude toward the first phase of the French Revolution.

the university had nurtured. He was still *aufgeklärt* rather than Frederickian in spirit.¹⁰ Precisely the opposite was true of Garve: his writings contain, in fact, the best justification of Frederickian despotism that his generation had to offer. The distinction between Gentz and Garve at this period is roughly the distinction that Gierke was marking in general when he spoke of the fact that "the natural law theory of the State came to be radically divided into the two sharply contrasted schools of 'Popular Sovereignty' and 'The Sovereignty of the Ruler.'" After the fashion of Hobbes, Garve had maintained that by the original contract the ruler was the recipient, by transfer and in perpetuity, of the natural rights of the people.¹¹ Gentz in all humility took issue with this position. Without actually using the words "sovereignty of the people" he indicated clearly that he meant just that. It was misleading, he felt, to speak of citizens as a ruler's subjects; they are, he declared, actually his constituents; they are the ruler's master, and the judge of the ruler's actions is the "voice of the people."¹²

After such an opinion on the theoretical side, it is not surprising to find words like the following, when Gentz finally, on March 5, 1790, spoke of the events in France: "The spirit of the age," he confessed, "stirs strongly and vigorously in me; it is high time for mankind to awaken from its long sleep. I am young, and the universal striving after freedom, which breaks forth on all sides, inspires in me sympathy and warmth."¹³ As late as December 5, 1790, the Revolution for him was still *die gute Sache*, the good cause. "I should consider the collapse of this revolution one of the greatest misfortunes that the human race ever met with," he declared. "It is the first practical triumph of philosophy, the first example of a constitution based on definite principles and embodying a consistent system of ideas; it is our hope and comfort in the face of the multitude of hoary evils under which mankind sighs. If it should fail, the evils would be ten times more incurable."¹⁴

While Gentz was thus aglow with enthusiasm for the Revolution

¹⁰ In October, 1789, for instance, he wrote a letter dealing extensively with abstract political questions, but without once mentioning the events taking place in France. Henriette Herz, on the other hand, declared that she saw Gentz a great deal at this time and that he talked constantly of the Revolution. *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:146-153; J. Fürst, ed., *Henriette Herz: Ihr Leben und Ihre Erinnerungen* (Berlin, 1850), 138-139. A more definite statement would be possible were it not for the fact that only two of his letters from the year 1789 have been preserved.

¹¹ O. F. von Gierke, *Natural Law and the Theory of Society, 1500-1800*, translated by Ernest Barker, 1:143 (Cambridge, 1934); Reinhold Aris, *History of Political Thought in Germany from 1789 to 1815* (London, 1936), 155.

¹² *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:151.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 158-159. ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 178, 179.

and devoted to the idea of popular sovereignty, an article appeared in a Berlin journal which inspired his first literary venture. This article by one of the most original political theorists of the day, Justus Moeser, the sage of Osnabrück, irritated Gentz by the "intolerably indifferent way" in which it disparaged and ridiculed the natural rights of man. Gentz composed an essay "on the origin and the highest principles of law." It was published some months later in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, whose editor, Biester, opposed though he was to the Revolution, sought to give his magazine a nonpartisan character. On logical rather than historical grounds he tried to show that all civil rights derived from the three natural rights of liberty, property, and contract. Clearly the imprint of Kant and the classroom was still strong upon him.¹⁵ Biester deigned to say some kind words about the article and its author; but except for a certain biographical interest that attaches to it because of the light it throws on Gentz's thinking at this period, the article is of little importance. The reception of his essay, however, encouraged Gentz to continue laboring seriously in the field of political philosophy. He waded through Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* for the third time, analyzing it carefully and making critical excerpts as he went along.¹⁶ Montesquieu he went at in the same fashion. He began to study the course of the Revolution admiringly and in all seriousness.

Gentz's interest in the Revolution was further stimulated by his association with his cousin Ancillon and Wilhelm von Humboldt, two young men who had eminent careers before them. Both Ancillon and Humboldt had made extended visits to Revolutionary France to view what was going on, and upon their return had become Gentz's most intimate companions. Ancillon, who later acquired a reputation as a reactionary of the reactionaries, appears at this time to have entertained relatively favorable sentiments toward the events in France. At least his sympathetic encouragement had been largely instrumental in persuading Gentz to submit his pro-Revolutionary article to the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*. "Never in my life," said Gentz "shall I find a man more harmoniously tuned to me."¹⁷

¹⁵ Gooch, in his *Germany and the French Revolution*, 93, refers erroneously to this article as Gentz's first book. See also *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:136-137, 172 and note; Aris, *Political Thought in Germany*, 258; Otto Tschirch, *Geschichte der öffentlichen Meinung in Preussen vom Baseler Frieden bis zum Zusammenbruch des Staates, 1795-1806* (2 vols., Weimar, 1934), 1:12-20.

¹⁶ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:181. Garve translated *The Wealth of Nations* into German in 1794. Frederick B. Artz, *Reaction and Revolution* (New York and London, 1934), 67. Throughout his life Gentz made copious notes on his reading.

¹⁷ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:156-157, 172, 183.

This enthusiasm for Ancillon was shortly thereafter replaced by an equal enthusiasm for Humboldt. Humboldt appears to have had a fleeting impression of Gentz as early as 1788, and it was not a favorable one: "Gentz is a windbag who pays court to every woman."¹⁸ Closer acquaintance, however, modified this opinion considerably. In 1791 Humboldt, one of the striking figures of his generation, was already, at twenty-two, completing one of his phenomenally brilliant terms of government employment. An aristocrat in the best sense of the word, he possessed a mind, a fund of information, and a passion for knowledge which marked him as a man apart; Gentz was first drawn to him because of his "remarkable head." He was younger than Gentz, but Gentz was elated beyond words when Humboldt finally dropped his cold hauteur and treated him as an intellectual equal. For all his intellectuality, however, one suspects Humboldt of posing. Had he been an American, the disinterested quality of his intellect and scholarship would have made him a great chief justice, but he was not content to be a man of intellect and scholarship. He must play the exquisite, assume the attitude artistic. "Gentz has . . . little aesthetic sense," he commented superciliously; but one wonders whether he himself had much aesthetic sense, in spite of his letters to Schiller and to Goethe. For politics he professed a certain disdain, remarking loftily that the truly great, the intellectually and morally perfected man, exerted greater influence than other people by virtue of his mere existence. From the sheltered snugness of his propertied security he asked the world to leave him and all men of intellect and genius alone. The social problem, as he conceived it, was primarily the problem of the superior individual in his relation to the mass: that society was best which combined order with a maximum of freedom for the unfolding of genius and for the blossoming of a few well-rounded personalities. This conception of *Kultur*, so different from the ideals of the Western democracies, has characterized German thought. Henriette Herz, who knew Humboldt well, declined to take all this quite at its face value: Humboldt was cold toward everything but himself, she said; conceit and the desire for honor and glory were the dominant traits of his character.¹⁹

¹⁸ *Briefe von Chamisso, Gneisenau, Haugwitz, W. von Humboldt, Prince Louis Ferdinand, Rahel, Rückert, L. Tieck, u. a., aus dem Nachlass Varnhagen's von Ense*, edited by Ludmilla Assing (2 vols., Leipzig, 1867), 2:116. See also Anna von Sydow, ed., *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt in ihren Briefen* (7 vols., Berlin, 1906-16), 1:354, 391, 418-420.

¹⁹ Gooch, *Germany and the French Revolution*, 105; Sydow, *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt*, 1:344; E. R. Curtius, *The Civilization of France* (New York, 1932), 13-14; H. Landsberg, ed., *Henriette Herz: Ihr Leben und ihre Zeit* (Weimar, 1913), 59. W. Stolze

Friedrich Gentz, swept off his feet by the noble lord, was not so critical; he avowed for Humboldt an affection such as he had felt for "scarcely any other person, although at the same time it was hemmed in by an almost burdensome admiration." As the time approached for Humboldt's departure from Berlin, every moment spent out of his company seemed to Gentz wasted. Eagerly he waited for the hour of ten at night when they usually met, and "each time," says Gentz, "the bright morning surprised us." Humboldt continually revealed himself in a new light. To Gentz, his "clean strength," even more than his intellectual powers, was amazing.²⁰ Through the 1790's and again between 1813 and 1815 Gentz saw much of Humboldt, although never again were they so close as in the first years of their friendship. Still in 1797 a new departure of Humboldt from Berlin could move Gentz to write: "When he had left me yesterday evening, I really felt an emptiness which I can't describe. If there were no Humboldt, one would have to invent one, as Voltaire remarked about a certain person by the name of God."²¹

Less volatile by nature, Humboldt displayed more reserve in his comments on Gentz. "Generally speaking Gentz has the most thoughtful head of any man in Berlin," he told Schiller; and coming from Humboldt that was no mean compliment. Years later, after he had lost much of his respect for Gentz, Humboldt still retained a pleasantly mellow remembrance of the elevated level at which they had met as aspiring young men. "We cared absolutely nothing for externals," he wrote; "we spoke only of ideas, feelings, and men; our interest was all in the entirely general, or in the most highly unique."²²

In the history of Gentz's intellectual development his intimacy with Humboldt in the year following April, 1791, was of the greatest importance, for during those months his thought underwent one of its most profound changes; and Humboldt appears to have exerted real influence in bringing it about.

has recently stressed Humboldt's loyalty to the Prussian state in an article which substantiates my statement that Humboldt's occasional profession of disdain for politics was mainly a pose. "Der junge Wilhelm von Humboldt und das preussische Staat," in *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte*, 47 (1935):161-171.

²⁰ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:183, 197-201.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 2:52.

²² *Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Wilhelm von Humboldt*, edited by Albert Leitzmann (Stuttgart, 1900), 75; *Schriften von Friedrich von Gentz*, edited by Gustav Schlesier (5 vols., Mannheim, 1838-40), 5:293.

3. The Middle Line

FOLLOWING his removal from Berlin in 1791, Humboldt was unable to free his mind of the political speculations which he professed to scorn. A lively correspondence ensued between him and Gentz, in the course of which Humboldt indicated that his attitude toward the French Revolution was changing. In August he revealed his conversion to the anti-Revolutionary point of view. "Constitutions cannot be grafted on men like shoots on trees," he declared. "When time and nature have not been at work, it is like tying blossoms on branches with string. With the first heat of midday they wilt."¹

Gentz, who was absorbed by the increasingly radical course of the Revolution, was greatly influenced by the trend in Humboldt's political thought. Humboldt was veering toward the point of view of Moeser and of Edmund Burke. Gentz was conversant with Moeser's works and he had read Burke's great *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. This book had interested him, but he had declared himself "opposed to its fundamental principles and conclusions." As the Revolution became more violent, however, Gentz began to perceive that instead of representing the culmination of the eighteenth century, it would, if unchecked, destroy the foundations of eighteenth-century society. Already impressed by the shift in Humboldt's views, he himself began to edge over toward the anti-Revolutionary camp. He caused Humboldt's dissertation in the form of a letter of August, 1791, to be published in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, and he prepared a translation of Burke's *Reflections*, to which he appended a number of political essays of his own. The work was published in 1793 and founded Gentz's reputation as a writer in Germany.

¹ *Wilhelm von Humboldt: Eine Auswahl aus seinen politischen Schriften*, edited by Siegfried Kaehler (Berlin, 1922), 5. See also Robert Leroux, *Guillaume de Humboldt: la formation de sa pensée jusqu'en 1794* (Paris, 1932), 236-250; Albert Leitzmann, ed., "Politische Jugendbriefe Wilhelm von Humboldt's an Gentz," in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, 152 (1935).

Burke's *Reflections* opened up new intellectual horizons to many people of his generation. Gentz saw the originality of Burke's ideas, but he used them for propagandist purposes without being convinced of their validity. To others, such as the German romantic philosopher Novalis, Burke's *Reflections* came as an inspiring revelation: it was truly a "revolutionary book against the Revolution," Novalis wrote.²

Burke maintained that the stupendous faith of eighteenth-century men in their own reasoning powers implied an individualism so extreme as to verge on anarchy and social chaos. To undermine this faith in individual reason, Burke insisted that history itself was the manifestation of a higher collective reason. He emphasized that what had been regarded as irrational in history and tradition was actually awe-inspiring and worthy of veneration by mortal man.

If it were really true that Gentz's "political theories at about the beginning of 1793 were those of Burke" and that they subsequently developed but little,³ it would appear that Gentz, child of the Enlightenment, had effected an intellectual somersault. Actually the amount of change registered in his views by 1793 represented something considerably less.

Gentz had translated Burke's volume not because it was a revolutionary book in the history of political thought, but because it was a magnificently eloquent tirade against the course of events in France. The most profound change that had taken place in Gentz's views involved, therefore, his attitude toward events in France and not toward Burke's "fundamental principles," which he had renounced upon first reading the *Reflections*.

It had been well enough to talk about "striving after freedom," and "the practical triumph of philosophy" over "the hoary evils under which mankind sighs," when these phrases were on every man's tongue and when as pretty ideas they were not challenging reality. Once the actual purport of these ideas was fully manifest, however, Gentz, like any good bureaucrat with social ambitions, scuttled for shelter to the security of a well-defined and stable social order.

This did not mean that Gentz was now ready to disavow natural rights and freedom and all those beautiful eighteenth-century clichés which, not so long before, he had defended. He had espoused natural rights in 1791 on logical grounds; as an academic exercise he could con-

² *Schriften*, edited by J. Minor, 2:136 (Jena, 1907).

³ Reiff, *Gentz*, 39. It is evident from Reiff's subsequent pages that he does not mean just what his quoted words say.

scientifically do so again. But he was no longer concerned with logic and academic exercises; he was concerned with realities. It was not Burke who had converted him: Garve, rather, had triumphed over Kant;⁴ in other words, the immediate and practical in Gentz had triumphed over the universal and rational. A systematic thinker would have been troubled by the sort of intellectual impasse into which he had thus worked himself. Not Gentz, however. The logical dilemma of the "either-or" did not disturb him.

The greatness of Burke lay in the fact that he faced squarely the challenge of the either-or. True, his book lacked that symmetrical order which characterized most of the products of Gentz's precise mind. Yet if Burke's book was not only "muscular and rhetorical" but also rhapsodic, it was still "a rhapsody from which a complete system can be developed." Gentz, on the other hand, for all his love of order and symmetry, did not even point the way to a thoroughly systematic political philosophy.

The gap between political ideals and actualized law, which Gentz could not close, did not baffle Burke. True, Burke did not quite bridge the gap, but he showed how it could be done: implicit in his writings was the idea that, through the actual, man might see the gradual unfolding of the ideal. Or to put it a trifle differently: in the actual, the traditional, the historical, man can find rational ideals revealed. Burke scoffed at the effrontery of theorists, sophists, and "oeconomists" who thought they could create rational ideals in their own minds. "It has been the uniform policy of our constitution," he declared in one of his most luminous passages, "to claim and assert our liberties as Englishmen as an *entailed inheritance* derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to our posterity; as an estate especially belonging to the people of this kingdom, without any reference whatever to any more general or prior right. . . . This policy appears to me to be the result of profound reflection, or rather the happy effect of following nature, which is wisdom without reflection, and above it."⁵

Gentz, a man of action — some would say reaction — was not deeply affected by this kind of thinking, which engendered an attitude of cloistered quietism, a preoccupation with the endless relativity of things.

⁴ It is interesting to note that in the very year in which his Burke translation appeared, Gentz openly took the field against Kant in an article entitled "Nachtrag zu dem Rasonnement des Herrn Professor Kant über das Verhältniß zwischen Theorie und Praxis," which was published in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*. See Walter Rasemann, *Die rationalen und traditionellen Elemente in der Publizistik des Friedrich von Gentz* (Düsseldorf, 1935), 65; Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Gentz*, 2:70-71; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:44.

⁵ *The Works of Edmund Burke*, 1:469 (New York, 1837).

For implicit in Burke is the idea that since the actual varies in time and place, the ideal reveals itself under different forms in different places. Burke never got quite that far,⁶ but a notable school, which developed in the next generation, did. Marching under a banner bearing the "opalescent" word *Historismus*, this school devoted itself to the cult of objectivity with admirable disinterestedness.⁷ It observed in history the various manifestations of wisdom unfolding "without reflection and above it." The highly regarded, but man-made, natural rights of the Enlightenment seemed far less impressive when compared with these new visions, which appeared in the garb of commonplace facts. The heirs of the Enlightenment were left in confusion.

Although he, too, was an heir of the Enlightenment, Gentz did not go to Burke's writings in search of their logical implications. Gentz found in Burke an emphasis on history, on tradition, which could be effectively used to counteract the radical tendencies of the Revolution. Gentz sought a practicable compromise, a common-sense balance, the kind which earlier in the eighteenth century had appealed to moderate men, to Locke, to Montesquieu. Recognizing the need for both rational progress and conservation of the heritage of the past, Gentz believed that the practical tact of wise statesmanship could bring about a satisfactory compromise. This was the message he wanted to impress upon the German people in 1793.⁸

The high resolve that had characterized Gentz's utterances in the latter part of 1789 had borne results. He had cultivated austere men and had devoted himself to productive literary activity upon austere subjects. But he himself had not become austere. For the triumph of Garve over Kant did not affect merely Gentz's intellectual processes; it was reflected in his subsequent conduct as a mature and unabashed worldling. Frequently in the future he was to make cynically devastating comments on his own conduct, but never again were torments of the flesh to wring

⁶ See Friedrich Meinecke, "Die englische Praeromantik des 18. Jahrhunderts als Vorstufe des Historismus," in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, 152 (1935).

⁷ Charles A. Beard and Alfred Vagts, "Currents of Thought in Historiography," in the *American Historical Review*, 42 (1937):461. See also V. G. Simkhovitch, "Approaches to History," No. III, in the *Political Science Quarterly*, 47 (1932):415, 416.

⁸ The old fallacy of Gentz, the Burke disciple, persists even in the most recent literature, such as Artz's *Reaction and Revolution*, 64, 66. On the other hand, Gooch, in his *Germany and the French Revolution*, 97, goes too far in discounting the extent to which Gentz used Burkian arguments. This is due partly to the fact that Professor Gooch, in his analysis of the essays by Gentz, ignores the essay entitled "Versuch einer Widerlegung der Apologie des Herrn Mackintosh," in which the influence of Burke is most apparent. See particularly *Betrachtungen über die französische Revolution nach dem Englischen des Herrn Burke vom Friedrich Gentz* (Berlin, 1793), pt. 2, pp. 125-126, 257.

from him expressions of deep spiritual anguish, such as appear in his earlier letters, or of the old moral purpose. In his intellectual development he had thus far evaded consistently the challenge of the either-or, and in his private life he exhibited the same tendency to avoid the choices that required character and self-discipline. The somewhat unsavory story of Gentz's domestic and social life may be approached in a roundabout way with the introduction of a man named Karl Gustav von Brinckmann.

The adulating hangers-on of the literary world exist in every epoch, and James Boswell has even lent to the species a certain grandeur. Gentz's generation had its share of these gentry, and posterity owes a good deal of its information about the period to the Varnhagens and Böttigers who stalked famous friends and encouraged them to write letters, which were then carefully preserved for the edification of subsequent generations. Brinckmann was a man of this kidney. A Swede of German extraction, he had been educated by the disciples of Zinzendorf and by the savants of Halle. Deeply religious, he became an intimate friend of Schleiermacher, but gave up the idea of an ecclesiastical career to study for the diplomatic service. He devoted himself chiefly, however, to literary pursuits and interests. Brinckmann was capable of sensitive appreciation of other people's work, and he turned out technically impeccable verses of his own, but he lacked the creative spark. Connected off and on through the nineties with the Swedish embassy in Berlin, he made a serviceable if undistinguished diplomat. Charming, disinterested, witty, he was the dilettante in every aspect of life, even in love—cultivating affairs only that he might indulge in the luxury of writing love letters, as the passionate Prince Louis Ferdinand disdainfully remarked.⁹

Brinckmann appeared in Berlin in 1790, about the time that Gentz was writing his anti-Moeser article. He glided upon the scene with his sociable and harmless ways, became acquainted with all the bright young people immediately, and encouraged various small and self-centered groups to mix more intimately with one another. The Jewish colony in Berlin was just beginning to attain a certain precarious respectability; Moses Mendelssohn had already showed what the German Jew could contribute to the nation's culture, and young Jewish women with brains and wealth were casting avid glances toward a world where life was freer and more enticing. They gave a particularly cordial reception to such interesting men as were seeking some mental stimulation amidst

⁹ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:1-16.

Berlin's intellectual barrenness. Brinckmann, like Varnhagen later on, was at once made to feel at home by the town's *Judentum*, and both Brinckmann and Varnhagen remained loyal to the group after their own social horizons had broadened. It was Brinckmann who had broken down Humboldt's prejudice against Gentz and had drawn the two young men together, but Brinckmann might not have known either Gentz or Humboldt had they not all frequented the home of Marcus Herz, the Jewish doctor in the New Friedrichstrasse, whose wife Henriette was Berlin's nearest equivalent to the Parisian salon hostess. Intermittently after 1790 Gentz's relations with Jewish circles were fairly close.¹⁰

Gentz's social connections were, for that matter, being extended in all directions. He gained entrance to aristocratic houses, where his gifted tongue acquired for him a certain modicum of favor. At the same time he retained close ties with the bourgeois-Huguenot section of the population from which he himself had sprung. It was to this class that he turned now to take unto himself a wife.

Whatever may have been the considerations that again turned Gentz's thoughts toward matrimony, one may be sure that all-consuming passion was not one of them. In the second half of 1791 he had composed a letter to his old flame Elisabeth Graun, who for several years had lived apart from her husband; the letter was obviously intended to clear the ground for a proposal of marriage. For some reason the letter was not sent until two years later, and then with a covering note of explanation, for by that time Gentz was a married man.

The maiden name of the wife whom he chose was Minna Gilly. The Gentz and Gilly families knew each other well. Both had Huguenot connections. There was another common point of interest which drew the two families together: Gentz's brother Heinrich was an architect, and Minna's father and her brother Friedrich were the outstanding architects in the Prussia of that day. Founder of the Bauakademie, the elder Gilly exemplified in his work the tendency toward a more functional architecture; the classic simplicity of the country seat he erected for Frederick William III at Paretz contrasts markedly with the petit elegance of Frederick the Great's Sans Souci. At the same time he

¹⁰ So intimate was Gentz with Berlin's Jewry that Benjamin Disraeli even included him among the notable Jews of modern times, and contemporary German genealogical research may be able to substantiate the assertion. I have seen no reliable evidence, however, to indicate that Gentz had Jewish blood, and certainly at one time and another he was responsible for a good many definitely anti-Semitic statements. See Disraeli, *Lord George Bentinck: A Political Biography* (London, 1905), 325.

shared and contributed to the reviving interest in the Gothic, and the village church which he built at Paretz was in the old German style. The functional emphasis was even stronger in the designs of Friedrich Gilly, the son. Gentz hailed him as "one of the foremost artistic geniuses which our fatherland has produced in this age," and after long indifference the critics of the twentieth century have resuscitated Friedrich Gilly's fame. His premature death at the age of twenty-eight was profoundly regretted by all who knew him. It is obvious, therefore, that Gentz's marriage into the Gilly family was eminently suitable for one of his station in life.¹¹

A smattering of evidence indicates that the courtship was calm and businesslike, that Gentz was urged on by his family, that he derived a certain quiet satisfaction in the prospect of a settled domestic existence, and that he even imagined himself in love. As for Minna, she had nothing of the *spirituelle* about her; she was good, she was solid, and matched with a man like Gentz she was pathetic. The word "you" recurs with singsong monotony in the sentences she addressed in 1798 to Brinckmann upon his departure from Berlin for Paris, and yet between the lines one senses somehow the pain in the heart of a self-effacing woman: "It may be permitted me also to say *ein kleines Lebewohl* to you. I cannot indeed suppose that my memory will linger long with you: however unimportant I may be to you, it will still give you *some* pleasure to hear that I shall not forget you. To say this I venture to address to you these few lines—the first and unfortunately also the last."¹²

There is no evidence that after their marriage either Gentz or his wife derived anything but increasing discomfort from each other's society. They were grossly mismatched; and through the 1790's Gentz's expanding role as a public figure was enacted against the deepening gray background of his domestic life. The good-hearted and well-meaning Brinckmann, who knew him well, had had many doubts before the marriage took place. While Gentz was in the last stages of his courtship he excited comment among Berlin gossips by his failure to wind up an affair with an actress of Charlottenburg. Brinckmann was outraged; he went to see the actress and talked to her in plain German. Then he wrote Gentz a letter in which he unburdened himself of the following well-chosen remarks: "If my friendship for you rested on any precon-

¹¹ Franz Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (4 vols., Freiburg, 1929–37), 2:365–368; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:226; Alste Oncken, *Friedrich Gilly, 1772–1800* (Berlin, 1936).

¹² *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:18, 20–22, 64.

ception about your moral spotlessness, it would be at an end. However, I do not judge you differently from the way in which I have for a long time judged others. I consider you far from strong enough to act uprightly always: I consider your morality slippery, unsafe, and sophistic. But I honor in you not merely the greatness of your mind, but also the goodness of your heart—if only your reason might succeed in taming the fury of your manifold passions! I like in you so many things that are noble, good, and admirable; and I longingly and heartily wish for you, as only a friend can wish it, more truth and integrity of character. All the admirable sides of your nature, all the still-slumbering potentialities for a clean moral activity I not merely suspect exist in you; I feel and rejoice in them already, and long for a development of your destiny which will bring all these fruits to maturity. This I expect from the change in your entire domestic life.”¹³

Gentz made the best defense he could of an indefensible position, but the future proved only too well the aptness of Brinckmann's remarks. Gentz's hopes and desires had taken a new direction between his twentieth and twenty-eighth year; he could not, or would not, live any longer the sedate domestic life of the typical burgher. To sit quietly at home in the evening with a dull wife became unbearable after he had tasted the sweets of success in the society of ambassadors and noblemen; all about him, furthermore, other German intellectuals were shifting wives about. Unfortunately Gentz had chosen an old-fashioned mate who was incapable of accepting these new-fangled notions; what for others was merely experimentation, for Minna Gentz was tragedy. The presence of children might have created an adequate family tie, but there were no children, although Gentz sired several offspring more or less casually here and there in the course of his career. Even without a family Gentz was unable to make ends meet financially. He associated with people who were rich, and his money slipped through his fingers. Debts accumulated, more debts than he could pay, and by 1797 he was compelled to declare himself bankrupt.¹⁴ Never the man to profit by experiences of this kind, he was to find himself in financial straits time and again in the future, and regardless of how large his income was, he had always to scramble desperately to eke out a bit more.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 28. See also Sydow, *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt*, 2:14, 15.

¹⁴ *Goethe's Briefwechsel mit den Gebruedern von Humboldt*, edited by F. Th. Bratranek (Leipzig, 1876), 25; Sydow, *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt*, 2:15-16.

4. Footholds to Success

ALTHOUGH for a decade after 1792 Gentz's private affairs became more and more muddled, the conditions of his official employment improved greatly. The improvement derived directly from his translation of Burke's *Reflections*. Gentz knew very well that eighteenth-century writers lived not "on their works, but on their dedications," and he inscribed his book to the man who could do him the most good — Frederick William II. To avoid the risk that royal eyes might never fall upon his offering, he wrote direct to the king a letter composed in his best begging style. After expressing gratitude for the good fortune of living under his "wise and mild scepter," Gentz declared that his steadfast intention of opposing French sophistry had led him to translate the "strongest refutation of the Revolutionary ideas which had appeared in any language," and that in an appended volume he himself "sought to develop on political and philosophical grounds a complete theory of the anti-Revolutionary system." At the close came discreet mention of the eight years during which he had labored with "burning zeal" for Prussia and of the three hundred thaler with which Prussia had so far seen fit to reward him annually.¹

The letter to the king was written on December 23, 1792, and the next month Gentz received the long-coveted title of *Kriegsrat*. In the following June he was transferred to the South Prussian department of the General Directory. This was a new department, made necessary by the second partition of Poland and put under the direction of Voss, Gentz's despised chief. Shortly thereafter, fortunately, South Prussia was assigned to Count Hoym, the Silesian minister. Gentz was given a position of some responsibility, his salary was increased to eight hundred

¹ Georg Brandes, *Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature*, 6:60 (New York, 1906); Gentz to King Frederick William II, December 23, 1792, in the British Museum, Add. 39779, f. 17. In writing to Garve on April 19, 1791, Gentz stated that his salary ("*fixes Gehalt*") amounted to four hundred thaler and that he now earned more than five hundred thaler a year. *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:196.

thaler and later to twelve hundred. The work was very light, so light indeed that in 1795 he was employed temporarily by the Westphalian department: "I know that your Excellency is getting a useful subject, but I know also that it [Gentz!] will become much better polished under your direction," Hoym wrote to Heinitz, the minister in charge. For all this official hauteur Gentz got along famously with Hoym, who was a friend of his father and of Garve.² Hoym could appreciate Gentz's literary aspirations and allowed him far more leisure than had Voss for the study and writing that were his main interests.

Gentz's rise may be attributed to the fact that to a certain extent he reflected the attitude of the Prussian government during the early 1790's. He had changed his own opinion of the Revolution just when Prussia shifted from alert neutrality to outright war, and his translation of Burke's *Reflections* had been timed exactly right for a favorable reception in the higher Prussian governmental circles. The war against France was not popular with a large segment of the educated middle class, with the masses, or even with the army; the government welcomed all the support it could get. By 1794, however, the king and his ministers had for various reasons lost interest in the war, and in the following year they made a peace with France that was carefully maintained for the next eleven years. Gentz, on his part, influenced perhaps by the fall of Robespierre and by the expectation that France would return to orderly ways, as well as by the changed attitude of his own government, became more temperate and, reverting somewhat to his position of 1789-90, expressed anew his belief in progress and in the ultimate triumph of liberalism.³

During this period, from 1793 to 1797, Gentz wrote a great deal. He contributed book reviews to the *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung* and published a long article on "the underlying principles of the present French constitution according to Robespierre's and St. Just's presentation of it" in Archenholz's *Minerva*, a periodical devoted to political and historical subjects. In 1795 Gentz took his first plunge as an editor, bringing out a magazine called the *Neue Deutsche Monatsschrift*. In this were published ten articles of his own and writings by such men as Herder, Garve, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and Gleim; Böttiger contributed a series of "letters from North America" in three installments, in which he warned his countrymen of the danger of land speculation and casti-

² Bailleu, "Zur Verabschiedung des Kriegsrats Gentz," in *Festschrift Schmoller*, 237-238.

³ Tschirch, *Geschichte der öffentlichen Meinung*, 1:56, 102-103; Rasemann, *Publizistik des Gentz*, 29; Leitzmann, *Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Humboldt*, 54.

gated Robert Morris in particular for his speculative activities. The most interesting of Gentz's own articles was one on the effect of the discovery of America, in which he analyzed the tremendous influence the New World had had upon the rise of the middle class and the cultural and political developments that had attended this advance. The magazine did not find much support from the public, however, and suspended publication after twelve months.⁴

Besides writing articles Gentz continued the work of translating books dealing with conditions in Revolutionary France from a critical standpoint. In 1794 he brought out a German version of Mallet du Pan's *Considérations sur la nature de la Révolution de la France et sur les causes qui en prolonguent la durée*; in 1795 Mounier's *Recherches sur les causes qui ont empêché les Français d'être libres*; in 1796 Burke's *Justification of His Political Life*; in 1797 Sir Francis D'Ivernois' *L'État des finances et des ressources de la République française au 1^{er} janvier, 1796*.

Even this formidable list does not exhaust Gentz's production during the years 1794 through 1797. In 1796 he completed a life of Mary Stuart, which was not published, however, until three years later. Gentz looked upon this biography as an interesting literary exercise in which he sought to carry out certain ideas of his own on the way history ought to be written. "These are my demands of the historian," he stated in a letter of June 20, 1797, to Böttiger: "Evenness, simplicity, the highest exactitude; liveliness without declamation; soberness without dullness; the most precise middle way between the poetic and the journalistic style; complete effacement and disappearance of the author in his subject, so that the individuality of the writer — which always will remain, and always must remain — is present only as a breeze which circulates gently over the work as a whole, but is apparent at no single point."⁵

This preoccupation with the problems of historical writing had a good reason behind it: Gentz was gathering materials for a massive history of the French Revolution. Throughout 1796 and 1797 he worked hard on this project; he bought a highly respectable collection of the chief sources, he corresponded with libraries, he enlisted the aid of his friends. By 1798, however, the task began to drag, and he confessed to Böttiger that he doubted whether his history would ever be written. Convinced though he was of his own unbiased position, he realized that

⁴ See *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:221, note; Tschirch, *Geschichte der öffentlichen Meinung*, 1:188; Friedrich C. Wittichen, "Zur Gentz-Bibliographie," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 27 (1906): 682-684.

⁵ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:230-231.

he belonged "more to the old than to the new school, more and more to the side . . . against which had conspired the tremendous mass of all the superficial, restless, innovation-seeking men, many of the most intelligent men, the majority of writers in all languages, the spirit of the time, luck, all the stupidity and mistakes of governments, and fabulous military victories." Gentz never recaptured enthusiasm for his history; it was not completed, and no part of it was ever published, although five large closely written volumes ready for the press were found among his papers after his death.⁶

The labors that had gone into this abortive historical work were not wasted. By 1798 Gentz was one of the best-informed men in the world on the French Revolution, and his thoroughgoing studies built a sound foundation for the unsystematic though important writings, with the Revolution as their basic theme, which he subsequently produced. Furthermore, the first great German work on the Revolution, that of Heinrich von Sybel, adopted so completely the Gentzian viewpoint that one can almost declare that the book which Gentz never got around to write was finally produced by von Sybel.⁷

Gentz's literary activity in the years between the appearance of his translation of the *Reflections* and 1797 had a definite purpose. He hoped to influence men of cultivated understanding. The number of such men in any age is necessarily small; the experience of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has shown that when all men can read, most of them still prefer to read trash. Probably most literate Junkers and burghers of Gentz's day also read trash, when they read at all; but Gentz did not concern himself with such people. He wrote for a few thousand of the intellectually elite, for a few thousand men who had learned to develop attitudes through a certain amount of ratiocination. Consequently, his writings appealed to the reason; they were logically rounded arguments that presented facts and developed conclusions in sentences of nice precision. Knowing that the conservative position which he represented was antipathetic to the majority of his Enlightenment-bred readers, he took care to give a tone of persuasive moderation to most of what he wrote.

These writings of the period before 1798 indicate that Gentz was preoccupied chiefly with problems of domestic policy—not so much

⁶ *Ibid.*, 128, 220, 222–224 and note, 226–227, 229, 245–246 and note, 314–317; Bratranek, *Goethe's Briefwechsel*, 24–25.

⁷ A. Luebbe, *Friedrich von Gentz und Heinrich von Sybel: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der neueren Historiographie* (Göttingen, 1913); George P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1913), 140–143.

with Prussian internal problems as with the problems of domestic policy in general. For one thing, his desire to stay on the good side of the censor led him to avoid a public discussion of Prussian affairs. In addition the problems presented by contemporary events in France must have struck him as far more interesting than those of Prussia. His study of French political events, which he broadened by constantly comparing French with English constitutional history, led to at least one interesting development in his political thought; namely, an increasing stress upon the idea that the application of the principle of balance of power to the internal organization of states best ensures their orderly existence.

The idea of balance of power was by no means a new one. With the rise of the system of sovereign states in early modern times, political thinkers seized upon this concept as one that would ensure a certain degree of stability in a Europe that no longer admitted, even in theory, the supremacy of pope or emperor. Until Gentz's day the concept was applied mainly in the sphere of foreign affairs, but Montesquieu had popularized the idea that a balance of power through separation of powers was the great characteristic of the much admired English constitution. Gentz had studied Montesquieu carefully, and his own thought on this question paralleled Montesquieu's; but the evidence indicates that Gentz's particular elaboration of the concept was the result of a number of influences—his study of Burke and Schiller, his historical research, and his upbringing in Huguenot circles, where the balance-of-power idea had been strongly prevalent for generations. What this elaboration was can be stated here only in the most general terms.

Gentz's method of approach was essentially rationalistic; that is, he formulated certain fundamental principles and tended to give them general validity irrespective of time and space. His fundamental principles of governmental organization were, first, that the executive power should be neither altogether dependent on, nor altogether independent of, the legislative power; and, second, that the legislative power should be neither altogether dependent on, nor altogether independent of, the executive power. The legislative power, when fully developed, should consist of two houses representing the people. On the manner of electing these representatives Gentz was perhaps purposely vague, and he neglected to explain precisely what he meant by "the people." Nevertheless it was clear that he had not yet abandoned completely the liberal principles of a decade before. As a constitutionalist he resembled those temperate, disillusioned liberals of the post-1815 period, who adopted the catchwords of the Enlightenment, but who, in their secret satisfac-

tion with the existing structure of society and in their respect for order, remained essentially conservative.⁸

As 1797 drew toward its close, Gentz's attention was drawn away from France and England and concentrated on events near at home. In November it had become apparent that dropsy was bringing Frederick William II to his end, and official Berlin buzzed with excitement at the prospect of a new king, of new men in high places, and of new policies. The crown prince was a taciturn young man who possessed all the second-rate virtues. He was industrious, economical, and straight-laced; he loved the army because of the uniforms and hated war because of the action. He disapproved heartily of his lecherous old father, and the ties that bound him to the nobility were of the slenderest. Perhaps partly because of all these limitations in the heir apparent, the bureaucrats brought up in the Frederickian tradition viewed the oncoming reign with unfeigned joy. Then, too, the crown prince was known to realize vaguely that the internal administration of Prussia was not all that it might be and that reform along "liberal" lines was desirable. The bureaucrats believed that this favorable attitude, combined with his aversion for the nobility, would make him their natural ally.

In the *Kabinett* the bureaucrats had already an agency through which, by adroit maneuvering, their influence could be made the dominant power in the monarchy; for the Prussian *Kabinett*, which consisted of the king's immediate advisers, was open to the middle-class civil servants,¹ and as an organization existed quite apart from the responsible ministries. The most active of the bureaucratic party was Anastasius Ludwig Mencken, Bismarck's maternal grandfather, an able and honest man. He had already presented to the crown prince a memoir in which he recommended that the *Kabinett* councilors should give advice unasked and that they should in fact be placed over the noble ministers. Such a change would give the bureaucracy governmental supremacy over the nobility. The crown prince accorded the memoir a favorable reception, and the hopes of the Mencken party ran high.

It has been noted that in 1795 Gentz still took a theoretical position on domestic affairs which would warrant classifying him as a temperate constitutionalist. He had at that time definitely committed himself,

⁸ It appears to me that Rasemann, in his *Publizistik des Gentz*, 38-42, has been misled by Gentz's confusing use of the term *Staatsbeamten* (state officials), and has accordingly given a false interpretation of Gentz's position. See Gentz, "Darstellung und Vergleichung einiger politischen Constitutions-Systeme die von dem Grundsatz der Theilung der Macht ausgehen," in the *Neue Deutsche Monatsschrift*, 3 (1795):123-127.

although in a somewhat academic way, to a form of governmental organization that would divide legislative power between the executive and certain representatives of the people. Mencken's program, on the other hand, conformed much more closely to the typical ideal of the Prussian bureaucracy. Brought up to think of enlightened absolutism as the best sort of government, the Prussian civil servants as a class believed that progressive change should be initiated by the monarch, who in turn should be advised and guided at every turn by carefully trained governmental employees.

On the level of theory, therefore, Gentz's relation to Mencken in 1797 was essentially the same as his relation to Garve in 1789. Practically this meant that Gentz and Mencken differed on means rather than on ends. Their difference was in no sense one that would hamper cooperation. For three years Gentz had been cultivating Mencken with that perseverance which was so characteristic of him when he wanted to impress a man. There were special reasons, also, why Mencken's plan of action appeared peculiarly attractive to him at this time. Both then and later Gentz let fall remarks which indicate that he was playing a deep game and that he was lured on by a fleeting vision of himself as Frederick William III's chief adviser. The vision was by no means altogether illusory. Mencken might well win the king over to the idea of *Kabinetts* supremacy. Once that was done, it appeared likely that Mencken would assume the chief position in the *Kabinetts*. But Mencken was a sick man and had not long to live. His shoes would soon be ready for the filling. Was not Gentz Mencken's fair-haired boy? Would he not be the logical man to carry on?⁹

The stakes for which Gentz was playing were therefore high as he planned his next move. He determined to bring himself in some striking fashion before the new king, and an action of Mirabeau's suggested the means. When Frederick William II had mounted the throne Mirabeau had addressed him in a public memorial on the state of the nation and what to do about it. Gentz decided to do the same for Frederick William III.

In the middle of November Frederick William II died, and shortly thereafter Gentz's open letter appeared. It was cloaked, but not too carefully, in the mantle of anonymity. It was a document of ambitious trimming, containing the sort of thing which the king would be

⁹ Eduard Fueter, *World History* (New York, 1922), 270; Paul Wittichen, "Friedrich Gentz und Preussen vor der Reform," in *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte*, 18 (1905):210-212; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:234-236; Eugen Guglia, *Friedrich von Gentz* (Vienna, 1901), 156-157.

glad to hear said. The king's love of peace was played up to in a pretty admonition to neutrality. (Gentz did not really believe in neutrality.) The king was known to favor considerable freedom of the press, and Gentz urged more freedom of the press. (Gentz had not yet thought his way into the clear on this important subject and lived to regret these particular paragraphs more than any he ever wrote in his life.) Only when he came to the relation of government to business, in which he advocated the abolition of artificial restrictions on commercial activity and especially the abolition of certain monopolies, did Gentz, the life-long disciple of Adam Smith, speak with real conviction.¹⁰

A week after its appearance the letter was brought to the king's attention by the queen. Though preoccupied with routine matters, the king glanced at the phrases urging neutrality, and so struck was he by the words that he read the letter through and praised it heartily several times, once in the presence of the entire court of Prince Ferdinand of Prussia. Gentz soon heard of this favorable reception and hastened to come forth openly as the author. For several days he basked in the lime-light that he loved so well. To Böttiger in Weimar he wrote: "This small and unworthy production has made a sensation among all classes, and has brought me actually one of the pleasantest experiences of my life."¹¹ The German press gave the memorial wide and on the whole favorable publicity, though some thought it a great piece of effrontery for so young a man to pontificate. The immortal Goethe scoffed privately that Gentz had ranged himself with those democrats "who daily stick their bare bottoms out the window."¹²

For the time being, however, everything seemed to be working out well — exactly, in fact, as Gentz had hoped. Not only had his open letter brought his name strikingly to the attention of the king, but on the third day of the new reign Mencken was given "the direction of all civil affairs," a post which he accepted, to quote Gentz, "only on terms which reflect everlasting honor upon him and the king."¹³ A commission was also set up to abolish the most objectionable of the monopolies Gentz had attacked in his open letter — the tobacco monopoly — and he had the satisfaction of serving on the commission. He was charged with drafting the protocol. "Seldom have I had a more tiring job, but seldom a more enjoyable one," he gloated; "I knew that the eyes of the entire country were fixed on us and that the result was being awaited

¹⁰ Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 2:12-32.

¹¹ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:236.

¹² Tschirch, *Geschichte der öffentlichen Meinung*, 1:283-284 and note.

¹³ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:235.

with impatience. Last Sunday, in the quiet of my office and with a heart really moved, I wrote the patent of declaration, which I was so sure beforehand would throw several millions of men into delighted ecstasy.”¹⁴ Whether or not the millions of men found themselves in a condition of delighted ecstasy, it is certain that Gentz himself was in such a state, not merely because of the tobacco commission but because of the way the internal affairs of the monarchy generally were being managed.

By February 1, 1798 — that is, within a little over a month — disillusionment had replaced ecstasy, and Gentz was re-echoing bitterly the words which the new American ambassador had written to his father six weeks before. John Quincy Adams had reported that the internal changes might be great but that they would not take place immediately nor perhaps very soon.¹⁵ Gentz himself acknowledged that changes must be made slowly and after mature reflection.

The Mencken program, in fact, was being neatly sabotaged, and Gentz was getting an inside view of how governments of men reveal the cross-purposes of men. On the commission for South Prussian reorganization, for example, where he was bringing the protocol to a sorry close, he could see his good friend Mencken in full cry after his good friend Hoym, while simultaneously a group, whom Gentz referred to as the “military cabal,” engaged in annoying sapping operations on their own initiative. General von Ruechel, Colonel von Zastrow, and Lieutenant General von Schulenburg appear to have been leaders of this military clique, who, said Gentz, “are striving tirelessly for the scepter and are able to attain their objective.”¹⁶ Altogether the more he saw of the government the less attractive it appeared to him. To Böttiger he delivered himself of an explanation which is sufficiently interesting and revealing to warrant full quotation:

“Men whose applause is infinitely precious to me, and whose judgment I respect, have expressed now and then the desire to see me participate in the business of the *Kabinett*. Here also this has been spoken of now and then. I want to tell you seriously what I think of the matter. At the outset of the reign it was in my power to have myself proposed by M. [Mencken] as his assistant, and more than one (possibly sad) opportunity will conceivably come up [in the future] when I could effect this without any difficulty or intrigue. Since M. now

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 233.

¹⁵ *Writings of John Quincy Adams*, edited by Worthington C. Ford, 2:233 (New York, 1913).

¹⁶ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:242–243, 252.

directs *all* internal administration [*Zivilgeschaefte*], since he is now extremely sunken and will certainly be torn from us all too soon, you will readily see how much enticement such a career offers to an active, ambitious, and self-confident man. Furthermore I should deceive you if I did not acknowledge that there have been many moments when I felt passionately the attraction which hovers about that prospect, and that there have been other moments when I have been filled with enthusiasm for the idea that it was my *duty* to avail myself of such a position. But reason, cold-blooded reflection, incorruptible knowledge of self, all-powerful fear of selling my freedom for mistaken enjoyment and of exchanging my true mission for a specious one — these won out over ambition for place, and with God's help will always win out. I am not equal to this difficult post: I may have as much knowledge as M., and perhaps more talent than he, but in me there is lacking the imperturbable, everlasting, divine serenity of his character; in me there is lacking his heroism, his steadfastness, his indifference toward all inimical undertakings, and his art in hiding his tremendous strength and firmness behind an exterior that is gentle, gay, and sweetly deceiving. I am not made for banging away at cabals endlessly, I have a fear of the military which is not to be subdued, and if the king should put his entire trust in me today, I should certainly go to pieces in less than half a year.”¹⁷

The events of 1798 strengthened Gentz in his determination to renounce political ambition. A commission was set up to examine thoroughly Prussia's financial system. Once more Gentz drafted the protocol and he presided when the chairman was absent. For two years the sessions dragged on with meager results. In the meantime Mencken and Hoym played out the final act of their dog-eat-dog performance: Mencken saw to it that South Prussia was taken away from Hoym and given to Voss. With South Prussia Voss got a most unwilling Gentz. Illness, as was expected, removed Mencken from *Kabinett* activity, and Beyme stepped into the position upon which Gentz's eye not so long before had been fixed. The *Kabinett* proceeded in fact to assume the dominant position foreseen by Mencken in 1797: it held the mastery over the men who ostensibly were ministers. The government thus fell into the hands of clever but brittle middle-class officials and stodgy martinets.

The development of Napoleonic imperialism made Gentz increasingly resentful of the passive foreign policy that he himself had urged

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 243–244.

upon the king, and Beyme's direction of civil affairs filled him with anything but satisfaction. Gradually he went into open opposition, ceased to participate in official activities of any sort, and devoted himself exclusively to the career of writing on public questions. In 1800 he delivered a blast against *Kabinett* government in general and the Prussian version of it in particular. It was his parting shot as a Prussian bureaucrat.¹⁸

¹⁸ Paul Wittichen, "Gentz und Preussen vor der Reform," in *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte*, 18:218-227; Otto Karmin, ed., "Lettres inédites de Frédéric Gentz à Sir Francis D'Ivernois, 1798-1803," in the *Revue historique de la Révolution française et de l'Empire*, 4 (1913):8-9; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:206, 209-210; Paul Wittichen, "Das preussische Kabinett und Friedrich von Gentz: Eine Denkschrift aus dem Jahre 1800," in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, 89 (1902):252-270.

THE PUBLICIST
1797-1802

5. The Good Cause

NO WRITER in Germany, Gentz alone excepted, followed the course of events in Revolutionary France so closely as did Wieland, the German Voltaire. Quicker even than Gentz to catch the true significance of the year 1797, Wieland wrote near its close: "You Frenchmen will soon have a Dictator. Indeed, he is waiting for you. Bonaparte will restore the nation."¹

Bonaparte on his side, with the Italian campaign successfully behind him and the Treaty of Campo Formio virtually in his pocket, had shown by his next step that he was quite equal to the role Wieland assigned to him. To the Directory he declared humbly: "There remains for me nothing but to lose myself again in the crowd, to take up again the ploughshare of Cincinnatus, and to give an example of respect for the magistrates and of aversion for the sort of military regime which has destroyed so many republics and brought the downfall of so many states."²

Gentz, preoccupied with events at home, failed until surprisingly late to realize the potentialities of Bonaparte. His extant letters make no mention whatever of Bonaparte until Wieland published his thoughts on dictatorship in the *Neue Deutschen Merkur* for March, 1798. Gentz's immediate response to the article was to affirm that dictatorships in themselves were bad and that a dictatorship of the "blood-dripping creator of the Italian republics" would be worse than bad. The salvation of France, he asserted, would come only through the restoration of constitutional government, even if that should mean "the Constitution of 1795 with a few improvements." Dire comments on the dangers inherent in French imperialism then came thick and fast, and he re-echoed the prediction of Mallet du Pan that the "Revolution would make the round

¹ This very free and loose arrangement of Wieland's words I have quoted from Gooch, *Germany and the French Revolution*, 157. See also Christoph M. Wieland, *Sämmtliche Werke*, 32:47-55 (Leipzig, 1840).

² *Correspondance de Napoléon I^{er}* (32 vols., Paris, 1858-70), 3:376.

of Europe within six years." The expedition preparing against England filled him with particular alarm; "should it succeed," he declared more dourly than ever, "and should a new general Continental war not break out, the Revolution is going to stride forth from the Rhine to the Vistula and from the Po to the Carpathians, before the eighteenth century goes to its end." On May 19, 1798, Bonaparte, who had not lost himself in any crowd, set sail with the famous expedition. But its destination was Egypt: the French were "to conquer London on the banks of the Nile" — and Prussian prophets of woe could retire, abashed Jobs, to the shelter of their vines and fig trees.³

Gentz calmed down, but he was now thoroughly convinced that the policy of peace, which he himself had urged upon the king in his open letter, was a colossal mistake. The pacific king, harassed and weak, had not undergone a similar transformation. He consulted scarcely anyone except the councilors in the *Kabinet*, who merely strengthened him in his conviction that neutrality was the best policy. The articulate public of the country, in so far as there was any, likewise expressed itself overwhelmingly in favor of neutrality. But as the year wore on, the ministers, who were ostensibly charged with the conduct of foreign policy, became gradually convinced that Prussia should associate herself with a coalition against France. By the end of 1798 conditions were such as to force Gentz to reverse his position of a year before and range himself with the ministers against the *Kabinet*.⁴

At least three ministers — Haugwitz in the foreign office, Schulenburg in the audit office, and even Voss, Gentz's immediate and despised superior — were involved in his next move: the foundation of an anti-revolutionary monthly, the *Historisches Journal*. Haugwitz encouraged the enterprise, Schulenburg was persuaded to subsidize it, and Voss gave Gentz an abundance of leisure. After the Finance Commission completed its work in 1799, Gentz drew his pay but did no further government work.

The first issue of the *Historisches Journal* appeared in January, 1799. It was a pocket-sized magazine with a sober blue cover, and contained one hundred and thirty pages of solid reading matter. There were two articles, one on the "trend of European public opinion on the French

³ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:210, 251–252; Karmin, "Lettres de Gentz à D'Ivernois," in the *Revue historique de la Révolution française et de l'Empire*, 4:10; *Historisches Journal*, 1 (1799):172.

⁴ Albert Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française* (8 vols., Paris, 1895–1904), 5:415–418; Tschirch, *Geschichte der öffentlichen Meinung*, 1:314, 318–325, 416, 427; Karmin, "Lettres de Gentz à D'Ivernois," in the *Revue historique de la Révolution française et de l'Empire*, 4:11, 12.

Revolution," the other on the "Egyptian expedition"; there was finally a long review of Mallet du Pan's *Essai historique sur la destruction de la ligue et de la liberté helvétique*. Gentz was the sole author, and with the exception of two articles by Ancillon, every word in the magazine during the two years of its existence was written by him. The tone of the articles was fairly moderate. To be sure, his praise of Mallet du Pan indicated from the start and without equivocation that he still ranged himself beside Burke and company, and an intelligent reader would readily see that the magazine aimed to build up in Germany a favorable attitude toward England, Austria, and Russia, and to foster a correspondingly antagonistic attitude toward France; but Gentz did not come out directly for a new orientation of Prussian policy. The Prussian government allowed great freedom of expression in the public prints on matters of internal, but not of foreign, policy, and king and *Kabinett* were at bottom still convinced of the desirability of maintaining Prussian neutrality. Gentz ventured, therefore, just as far as he dared under the circumstances.

In Hamburg a certain Hennings, who edited a magazine called *Genius der Zeit*, saw clearly the ulterior implications in the tenor of Gentz's writings. Hennings approved heartily of the current Prussian policy and determined to eliminate if he could this upstart rival, who in his view was acting against the public interest. After a supercilious notice of the *Journal*, which drew Gentz's justifiable protest, Hennings prepared a lengthy review which misrepresented the facts in the most offensive way and accused Gentz openly of preaching war. In vain did Gentz plead that since 1794 he had been "steadfastly and firmly for peace"; in vain did he demand that Hennings produce one line in which he had advised war or expressed a wish for war. Into print went the review; but the *Historisches Journal* survived.⁵

Although one can scarcely sympathize with Henning's narrow-mindedness and his self-righteous misrepresentation of facts, it must be admitted that Gentz's protestations were more than slightly disingenuous. For Gentz had not been "steadfastly and firmly for peace" since 1794. He had himself shown some of that "spineless . . . vacillation backwards and forwards between opposing policies" which he castigated on the flyleaf of his *Journal*. He had only to reread his open letter

⁵ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:317-326, 362-365. Gentz's public reply to Hennings ("In wie fern kann man Unparteilichkeit und Neutralität von einem politischen Schriftsteller verlangen?" in the *Historisches Journal*, July, 1799) is well worth the reading, particularly when one bears in mind Gentz's later friendship with Ranke. Tschirch, *Geschichte der öffentlichen Meinung*, 1:434, 534.

to the king to see wherein he had vacillated; he had only to reread the letters he wrote to Mallet du Pan in the very period of the Hennings controversy to see that he was not quite self-evidently for peace. "You are able to make a frontal attack on the monster whom we are both fighting," he wrote enviously to Mallet. "I am condemned to hold myself at a certain distance, to deliver blows that are less direct and less audacious, to keep silent on many things that rend my heart." Still, he continued more cheerfully, "the hope of seeing Prussia associated with the coalition has by no means vanished."⁶

The fortunes of France were at this time at lower ebb than they had been for several years, and lower than they would be again for several more. At Acre, far away in the Levant, Bonaparte was suffering the first major setback of his military career. Into Italy had stormed Suvorov "to beat the godless, windy, feather-headed Frenchies." And beat them he did: by the end of May, North Italy, except for Genoa, Mantua, Cuneo, and a couple of fortresses, was in the hands of the combined Russians and Austrians. In South Germany the Archduke Carl had pushed forward to the Rhine. Clearly the opportune time seemed at hand for Prussia to throw her weight in with the coalition. Prussian military operations in conjunction with the allies on the Rhine and in Holland might well have brought success against the French Republic.⁷

Haugwitz saw this as through a glass darkly, and in May, June, and July he again urged the king to part with his precious neutrality. Frederick William, however, remained as usual indecisive, his mind grappling with circumstances he could not fully comprehend. Gentz in his impatience jumped to the conclusion that a certain disgraceful event that had recently occurred at Rastatt was strengthening the anti-Austrian prejudices of the king; here, he decided, was a subject that he might properly consider in his *Journal*.

Rastatt is a small town to the northwest of Baden-Baden near the Rhine. In this town since December, 1797, the German princes had wrangled endlessly about indemnification for their losses on the left bank of the Rhine, while the French delegates looked on. With the advent of Archduke Carl's victorious troops the congress broke up, and the Frenchmen were ordered to go home. In the outskirts of Rastatt they were fallen upon by Szeklers, wild fellows from eastern Hungary.

⁶ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:330-332.

⁷ W. Lyon Blease, *Suvorof* (London, 1920), 224; Oskar Criste, *Erzherzog Carl von Oesterreich* (3 vols., Vienna and Leipzig, 1912), 2:49-75; Ludwig Häusser, *Deutsche Geschichte vom Tode Friedrichs des Grossen bis zur Gründung des deutschen Bundes* (4 vols., Berlin, 1859), 2:230.

Two of the delegates were brutally murdered, and the escape of the third bordered on the miraculous. Their papers were seized, but the persons and property of other members of the party were not harmed. Circumstantial evidence indicated that the deed involved men high in authority, and it is now clear that the archduke had ordered robbery, but the order was couched in loose terms, and by the time it reached the Szeklers their commandant implied murder as well. At the time the Austrians hushed up the affair as much as possible and punished nobody, but the delegates from the smaller German states howled bloody murder.⁸

In the June issue of his magazine Gentz spoke his mind about the affair. Like the open letter to the king, the article is one of his most famous writings and also one of his worst. As a critic shortly afterward pointed out, a careful writer will not express himself loudly until he has facts to support his assertions. Gentz had no facts; he had merely his reasoned judgment that such a deed was opposed to Austrian interests and that therefore no responsible Austrian could be involved. When the facts eventually came out they showed conclusively that even a Gentz could err. It was fifteen years, however, before Gentz learned that his arguments on the subject would not hold water. In July, 1799, he even returned to the charge and defended Austria in another article written in the same tone as the first.⁹

The Rastatt articles had no perceptible influence upon Prussian policy. In that respect they failed of their purpose. Judged by the immediate impression which it made upon the Prussian government, the *Historisches Journal* was for that matter a failure from start to finish.¹⁰ From Gentz's own standpoint, however, the enterprise was a tremendous success. It brought him to the attention of the governments of Austria, Russia, and England — governments that knew how to express appreciation in ways peculiarly pleasing to a man of Gentz's tastes. He learned that with their support the career of publicist, though precarious, could be pursued independently, without slavish submission to the dictates of a Prussian king and *Kabinett* whose policies he heartily disapproved.

As soon as Gentz began to sense this interesting fact, his courtship

⁸ Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, 5:392-401; Heigel, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 2:337-340.

⁹ Gentz's Rastatt article has been reprinted in Hans von Eckardt, *Friedrich Gentz: Staatsschriften und Briefe* (2 vols., Munich, 1921). See also *Über den Sinn für historische Wahrheit und über einen Aufsatz in dem historischen Journal des Herrn Kriegsrats Gentz die Ermordung der französischen Gesandten betreffend* (Gotha, 1799); *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:333; Tschirch, *Geschichte der öffentlichen Meinung*, 1:397-405; *Historisches Journal*, 1 (1799):211-232, 341-344.

¹⁰ For the attitude of the German press toward Gentz at this period, see Tschirch, *Geschichte der öffentlichen Meinung*, 1:434-437; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:254, note.

of the foreign governments became at once wily, persistent, and ardent. At Vienna the all-powerful figure was Franz de Paula Thugut. Of humble birth, Thugut had risen almost miraculously to the position of director of the *Staatskanzlei*. His view of Austrian policy was an eighteenth-century view which persisted in representing Prussia, rather than an imperialistic France, as the real enemy of the Habsburg monarchy. Just one word to the effect that Thugut liked his *Journal* and would be glad to see it circulate in Austria enabled Gentz to excuse Thugut's deviations from the Gentzian conception of sound politics. He wrote Thugut, whom he addressed as the first statesman in Europe, that he had long admired his wisdom and determination, and assured Johannes Müller, whose position in Vienna enabled him to exert some influence, that he had never shared the usual Prussian hatred of the House of Habsburg. These efforts brought results. Before long Count Saurau was reminding the emperor of Gentz's courage in apprising the German public of the machinations of the French Directory. The emperor responded by graciously bestowing an enameled snuffbox upon Gentz, and Saurau informed him of the gift in a letter of fulsome flattery.¹¹ Intrinsically this snuffbox was probably of no great value, but it must have meant a great deal to Gentz, whose collection of royally initialed snuffboxes was at this time very small. Biographically it is important because it marks the first link in a connection with Austria that was to culminate in Gentz's removal to Vienna three years later.

Gentz's courtship of Russia was equally successful, and no articles like those on the Rastatt outrage were necessary to win gracious signs of favor. Through the czar's ambassador in Berlin Gentz had early sought permission to circulate his *Journal* in Russia, and within a few months he had tangible indication of the czar's esteem—a beautiful diamond-studded watch and a superb chain. It was a present, Gentz estimated with satisfaction, worth six or seven hundred crowns.¹²

It was with England, however, that the *Historisches Journal* established the bonds that were of the greatest immediate significance for Gentz. From his early youth, in common with other young Prussian bureaucrats, he had manifested great admiration for England; what was

¹¹ *Aus der alten Registratur der Staatskanzlei: Briefe politischen Inhalts von und an Friedrich von Gentz aus den Jahren 1799–1827*, edited by Clemens von Klinkowström (Vienna, 1870), 1–2; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:6. The correspondence relating to the gift from the Austrian emperor is to be found in J. v. Zahn, ed., "Gentziana," in the *Steiermärkische Geschichtsblätter*, 1 (1880):106–107. See also Emila Kipe, *Fryderyk Gentz a Polska, 1794–1831* (Cracow and Warsaw, 1911), 97–98.

¹² Gentz to Lucchesini, June 7, 1800, in *Das Geheime Staatsarchiv* (cited hereafter as G.S.A.), Berlin, Rep. 92, Fol. 82, Lucchesini's Nachlass 27.

more exceptional, he had mastered the English language and for years had followed English politics with a passionate zeal exceeded only by his lively concern with events in France. His library of English books on public affairs was surprisingly extensive and had been amassed at a cost that consumed a considerable proportion of his salary. He subscribed regularly to a number of English newspapers, which he read assiduously and excerpted with the greatest care.¹³ From the beginning his *Journal* devoted a large proportion of its space to the consideration of topics concerning England. These articles, without exception, sought to justify the policies of the English government and to foster the belief that England's power, and particularly her financial power, had not been weakened by the struggle with France. These apologetics in England's behalf culminated with a work on the "finance administration and national wealth of Great Britain," issued serially in the *Journal*. The project was an ambitious one, and when in the following year a French translation by Ancillon appeared in book form, Gentz made haste to send copies not only to such parliamentary experts on finance as Lord Auckland, the Earl of Liverpool, and "Old George" Rose, but also to George III, William Pitt, and Lord Grenville, the minister for foreign affairs.¹⁴

Suspension of specie payments by the Bank of England in 1797 had caused natural speculation about the financial stability of the country, and Tom Paine's brochure of 1796 entitled *The Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance* had found a wide and credulous public. Gentz's work, which showed that his study of political economy had been anything but that of a dilettante, contained a detailed refutation of the specious arguments upon which the collapse of England had been posited by men like Paine. His analysis of the national wealth led him to the conclusion that the huge wartime expenditures had not really overtaxed the resources of the state; his examination of the Bank of England brought the declaration that the institution was fundamentally sound. "The economic as well as the political structure of the English state," he pontificated, "is the greatest and noblest result of the social activity of mankind. . . . *Esto perpetua!*"¹⁵

Prior to the publication of this work Gentz's acquaintances in Eng-

¹³ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:207.

¹⁴ Karmin, "Lettres de Gentz à D'Ivernois," in the *Revue historique de la Révolution française et de l'Empire*, 4:26, 33; Gentz to Lord Auckland, March 8, 1800, in the British Museum, Add. 34455, f. 265; Gentz to the Earl of Liverpool, March 8, 1800, in the British Museum, Add. 38234, f. 17; A. F. Fremantle, *England in the Nineteenth Century* (2 vols., New York, 1929-30), 1:139.

¹⁵ *Historisches Journal*, 3 (1799):380-381.

land had been limited to Swiss *émigré* publicists like Mallet du Pan and Francis D'Ivernois. The immediate acclaim accorded to his book by notable Englishmen was therefore almost as surprising as it was gratifying. A personal letter of praise from Lord Grenville, a gracious word from Pitt, transmitted by D'Ivernois, and above all a sizable present in hard cash warmed the Anglophile cockles of his heart.¹⁶

Britain had need of such friends on the Continent, for the French again had the upper hand. Bonaparte's return to France and seizure of power in November, 1799, had been accomplished with alarming ease, and the triumph of the conservative element in France appeared to be coupled with a willingness to restore European peace. Even Gentz had been impressed. "All the steps which the organizers of this revolution have taken in the first days of their rule seem to justify the trust which is generally felt for them," he declared in an article on the *coup d'état* in the *Journal*.¹⁷ In subsequent articles the new constitution establishing the Consulate was examined at length, and the verdict was in the main a favorable one. Gentz thought that this constitution was capable of giving France a government that could govern, which was more than he could say for the earlier constitutions. The French people were ready for "an unlimited monarchy bearing the name republic"; Bonaparte *might* be up to the task he had assumed; and, above all, the European states were inclined toward the immediate establishment of a peace that would give the new government a chance.¹⁸

Without doubt the desire of the Continental powers for peace was becoming increasingly real. Czar Paul had withdrawn from the coalition and was suddenly as anti-British as shortly before he had been anti-French. Following a disheartening defeat at Marengo, after victory had appeared theirs, the Austrians hastened to conclude an armistice which, it was hoped, would give them opportunity to recuperate. Squeezed between a Russia and a France that had become friendly with each other, Prussia recognized that her precious neutrality was no longer adequate. Although Haugwitz was desirous of remaining on

¹⁶ Karmin, "Lettres de Gentz à D'Ivernois," in the *Revue historique de la Révolution française et de l'Empire*, 4:22; Gentz to Lucchesini, June 7, 1800, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 92, Fol. 82, Lucchesini's Nachlass 27; *Aus dem Nachlass Varnhagen's von Ense: Tagebücher von Friedrich von Gentz*, edited by Ludmilla Assing (4 vols., Leipzig, 1873-74), 1:2 (this is cited hereafter as *Tagebücher*). In this diary Gentz gives the present as a hundred pounds; his letter to Lucchesini puts the figure at five hundred pounds. See also Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Gentz*, 1:135-136, where a compromise is made on one thousand pounds! The book on English finance also received widespread attention in the French press. See Gentz's *Von dem politischen Zustande von Europa*, xix, note.

¹⁷ *Historisches Journal*, 3 (1799):441. See also *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:66.

¹⁸ *Historisches Journal*, 1 (1800):206, 364-371.

friendly terms with England, the Franco-Russian combination could not be resisted; reluctantly he permitted himself to be steered into Paul's anti-English armed neutrality, and reluctantly he allowed himself to be pushed into the occupation of Hanover. He had sought persistently during the summer of 1800 to mediate between France and Austria, only to see the negotiations break down and hostilities resumed. As the year drew to its close the Austrians received the *coup de grâce* at Hohenlinden, and soon afterward they signed the Treaty of Lunéville.¹⁹

The anti-English orientation of Prussian policy after the middle of 1800 was not reflected in the pages of the *Historisches Journal*. On the contrary, Gentz had veered away from his conciliatory attitude toward the Consulate, and his *Journal* became, if anything, more Anglophile than ever. England was compared to a "dependable squire," France to "a daring gambler" risking everything on the chances of world dominion.²⁰ The English financial situation was once again analyzed and the fundamental stability of the country reaffirmed, whereas France was pictured as a nation ruined economically but kept going by the irrational stimulation of its military successes.²¹ In short, the *Historisches Journal* for 1800 took the tone of an English propaganda sheet. Nothing betrayed its Prussian origin except its language, its author, and its place of publication.

As their own policy became, outwardly at least, more and more pro-French and anti-English, the Prussian ministers grew very cool toward the *Journal*, which they were subsidizing. Count Schulenburg alone remained friendly and approved a grant for the coming year. The king, however, turned his face away and vetoed the appropriation; he would agree only to the proposal that Gentz be relieved of routine duties for another twelve months.²²

The withdrawal of financial support hit Gentz in his most vulnerable spot, his pocketbook. Bankrupt in 1797, he had replaced the disorder in his affairs merely with more disorder. Froelich, who in 1800 supplanted Vieweg as the publisher of the *Historisches Journal* and to whom Gentz was under contract for the delivery of other works as well,

¹⁹ Prussian diplomacy in this period is admirably treated in Guy Stanton Ford's *Hanover and Prussia, 1795-1803* (New York, 1903), 192-216.

²⁰ *Historisches Journal*, 3 (1800):496.

²¹ See Karmin, "Lettres de Gentz à D'Ivernois," in the *Revue historique de la Révolution française et de l'Empire*, 4:18-19.

²² Gentz to Froelich, October [?] 23, 1800, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 94, IV, N.b.2, Fol. 49; *The Manuscripts of J. B. Fortescue, Esq., Preserved at Dropmore*, edited by W. Fitz Patrick (10 vols., Historical Manuscripts Commission, London, 1892-1927), 6:378-380.

was constantly called upon to make advances. With unvarying generosity he produced the money, and Gentz signed notes. When they fell due he pleaded for their renewal, demonstrating always in the most plausible manner that solvency lay just a few months ahead. With the refusal of the Prussian government to renew its subsidy, the possibility of meeting these obligations went glimmering.²³ He was now definitely a free-lance writer, and the environment of 1800 was anything but friendly to unsubsidized literature. If no new patron came to the rescue, he faced the unhappy alternative of again becoming a bureaucrat.

Gentz may have been the most irresponsible man in Europe about money matters, but he was not the fellow to accept with resignation a fate that he regarded with such aversion. The mere thought of resuming administrative routine made the roof of his mouth turn brown. For he had known freedom. It was a freedom, to be sure, which smacked a good deal of slavery—slavery to long hours of study, slavery to the task of grinding out one hundred, two hundred, pages monthly on difficult and often abstruse subjects. But he loved it. Life was troubled, and existence was a hand-to-mouth one, but each day there was a conversation tête à tête with some ambassador, a pinch of snuff and a confidential word, and the fan of a great lady tapping delicately upon his sleeve. Burke and Mallet du Pan were both dead, and Gentz felt the mantle of conservative eloquence fall snugly and fittingly around his shoulders. The emperor of Austria, the czar of all the Russias, the king of England, spoke his name approvingly. In Italy, too, he was known, for his *Journal* had been translated into Italian;²⁴ and even in faraway America young John Quincy Adams had repeated his message.²⁵ At the café Stadt Paris he could always find a group of kindred souls, roistering, footloose, witty, and uninhibited, with Prince Louis Ferdinand, the most romantic figure of his generation, at their head. Money meant

²³ Gentz to Froelich, November 1[?], 1799, May 30, 1800[?], October[?] 23, 1800, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 94, IV, N.b.2, Fol. 49.

²⁴ Gentz to Lucchesini, August 7, 1800, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 92, Fol. 82, Lucchesini's Nachlass 27.

²⁵ Adams had translated one of the most interesting of Gentz's *Historisches Journal* articles under the title *The Origin and Principles of the American Revolution Compared with the Origin and Principles of the French Revolution* (Philadelphia, 1800). Gentz, said Adams in a short preface, is "one of the most distinguished political writers in Germany." The article in question, he continues, "is for two reasons highly interesting to Americans: First, because it contains the clearest account of the rise and progress of the revolution which established their independence, that has ever appeared within so small a compass; and secondly, because it rescues that revolution from the disgraceful imputation of having proceeded from the same principles as that of France. . . . We presume it will afford a pure and honest gratification to the mind of every truly patriotic American reader, to see the honourable testimony borne by an ingenious, well-informed, and impartial foreigner to the principles and conduct of our country's revolution."

nothing, except that through money came wild pleasures and new excitements. To accumulate money, to amass possessions—even books—was to be middle class, to betray one's origins. Away with the library, sell it, even the Parliamentary Reports—everything but the Kant, the categorical imperative! Bankruptcy was fashionable. Did not Louis Ferdinand, the royal prince, have his debts, his troublesome creditors, no less than Gentz? A few hours of mad, concentrated labor . . . a boisterous meal at the Stadt Paris . . . Madame Lucchesini seeking advice . . . Herr Lombard of the *Kabinett*, a governmental power, dropping a succulent hint . . . Lord Carysfort, the British ambassador, listening, impressed (“Carysfort himself in my room!”). Dinner at the embassy, full dress: Count Haugwitz, resplendent . . . Baron Kruedener, the Russian ambassador, “a singularly organized beast” . . . Swedes . . . Danes . . . Talk, talk, talk . . . Out come the cards, away the money. “In *Berlin* there remains almost nothing for me to wish for,” Gentz declared in exultation.²⁶

Nothing to wish for except another patron! And that was soon found in the British government. As the outstanding Anglophile in Berlin, Gentz had been well received at the embassy all through 1800. The new ambassador, Carysfort, looked upon him as his oracle and filled his dispatches with Gentzian gleanings. When it became evident that the Prussian government was through with his *Journal*, Gentz turned to Carysfort with the proposal that the magazine be continued, that it appear in English translation, and that the government make good any deficit. How he proposed to finance the German edition he did not state in so many words, but his arguments indicate clearly enough that for this also he was expecting British assistance. Lord Grenville, when informed of the proposal, pointed out the impracticability of a regular English edition, but offered to put up 150 or 200 pounds “for [Gentz's] services abroad.”²⁷ This left Gentz considerable leeway, and instead of continuing the *Journal* he published two books in 1801: *Über den Ursprung und Charakter des Krieges gegen die französische Revolution*; and *Von dem politischen Zustande von Europa vor und nach der*

²⁶ Gentz to Lucchesini, August 22, 1800, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 92, Fol. 82, Lucchesini's Nachlass 27; *Aus Karl v. Nostitz' Leben und Briefwechsel* (Dresden and Leipzig, 1848), 37; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:90, 93, 362; Hans Wahl, ed., *Prinz Louis Ferdinand von Preussen: Ein Bild seines Lebens in Briefen, Tagebuchblättern und zeitgenössischen Zeugnissen* (Weimar, 1917), 136; *Fortescue Manuscripts*, 6:402–403; *Briefwechsel zwischen Friedrich Gentz und Adam Heinrich Müller, 1800–1829*, edited by Marie von Pilat (Stuttgart, 1857), 1–2. This is cited hereafter as *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*.

²⁷ *Fortescue Manuscripts*, 6:346, 355, 363, 371, 374–380, 394–395, 402–404, 409; *Tagebücher*, 1:3; Gentz to Froelich, March 4[?], 1801, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 94, IV, N.b.2, Fol. 49.

französischen Revolution. He had become a paid propagandist for the English government.

The last issue of Gentz's *Historisches Journal* was completely devoted to an essay of nearly one hundred pages, "Über den ewigen Frieden." This article and the two works of 1801 supplemented one another in the development and elaboration of certain basic ideas. With them Gentz reached intellectual maturity. They were far superior in quality to anything he had previously written, and though they lacked the rhetorical eloquence of some of his later works, they rank as the finest products of his labors as a publicist. Gentz never abandoned the principles they set forth.

The setting in which Gentz's ideas had been developed was one of those great periods of upheaval which, when they are widely attended by bloodshed, suffering, and brutality, inevitably renew men's yearning for that golden day when peace shall reign forever. The French Revolution produced a great deal of such yearning in the human heart. Blueprints for the ideal future were a penny a dozen; they ranged from Fichte's utopian vision of a world in which each state was self-sufficing, except in the realm of ideas, to Kant's picture of a league of nations. Skeptics shook their heads doubtfully; man and war, they declared, are and will be eternally inseparable. Among the skeptics was Gentz. "Everlasting peace," he lamented, "is certainly a chimera; but it is a chimera only in so far as a completely legal constitution for mankind in general remains chimerical. We should strive seriously, courageously, and untiringly for both; but so long as we are men, both will be unrealizable for us."²⁸

This was not a snap judgment on Gentz's part: the statement just quoted had been preceded by a lengthy critique of universal monarchy, national isolation, and world federation as a means of attaining enduring peace, a critique so able and so realistic that more than a hundred years' subsequent discussion was to add little that was new. This is not to say that Gentz's arguments were irrefutable in any absolute sense. Based on historical experience, they were subject to the weakness of the historical approach—insufficient leeway for flights of the imagination and affirmations based on faith.

Gentz was congenitally a man of little faith. It was as impossible for him to believe in the eventual reality of universal peace as for him to believe in the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. He would

²⁸ *Historisches Journal*, 3 (1800):781.

have liked to believe in both. Failing these resources, he took refuge in a sort of practical idealism, and again found satisfaction in the idea that through the positive, the actual, man finds the gradual unfolding of the ideal. This idea, which he had discovered in Burke, intrigued him, but he could not wholly accept it, any more than could Burke; for acceptance of such a notion would mean acceptance of the French Revolution, and Napoleon Bonaparte, and the year 1800. For many a man in the land of poets and thinkers the year 1800 was hard to take. Some, like Fichte and Kant, escaped in utopian flights into the future; others, like Gentz's young friend Adam Müller, preferred imaginative flights into the Middle Ages. But Gentz, whose feet were weighted to the ground, was capable only of a pedestrian hop to the Europe of 1788, the Europe that immediately preceded the Revolution. The system of European states that had taken shape in modern times, particularly in the eighteenth century, he found good; it was not ideal, but it was capable of orderly improvement and, when operative, provided a satisfactory *modus vivendi*. Thrown out of kilter by the Revolution, it must be restored, and for its restoration Gentz had a definite plan. He had also a definite conception of the nature of the system he so admired.

If the pre-Revolutionary states system was to be restored, an Austro-Prussian coalition was essential. Russia, England, and most states of the second and third rank would always stand ready to join such a coalition so long as the French dominated Europe. But with either Prussia or Austria lacking, the coalition could never be more than palliative. To cure the evil both countries must join. With the Netherlands, the left bank of the Rhine, Switzerland, and northern Italy in her possession, France was in a position to engulf Germany, unless the two great powers of central Europe met her in united opposition.²⁹

The argument was put strongly and without indirection, and it would have been still stronger had not the Prussian censors intervened.³⁰ Never before had Gentz spoken in such terms about the foreign policy of his country, and never before had he spoken with greater conviction. Through eight long and trying years he was to preach the same doctrine, only to see his counsels unheeded, and with disastrous results for both Austria and Prussia.

Gentz knew that the formation of such a coalition presented great difficulties. In the first place the chancelleries of Europe were by no means convinced that France was their common foe. In Vienna Thugut

²⁹ Gentz, *Von dem politischen Zustande von Europa*, 254-263.

³⁰ *Tagebücher*, I:4.

continued to entertain the expansionist ambitions of his predecessor, Kaunitz. These ambitions, which looked to an extension of Austrian control over central Italy, on the one hand, and over Bavaria on the other, aroused mistrust and animosity in Berlin no less than in Paris. With some justification, therefore, Prussia regarded Austria with misgiving. At the same time both Austria and Prussia suspected that the colossus in the east, Russia, was perhaps more dangerous than the colossus in the west, France. From this last suspicion Gentz himself was not completely free. And, finally, every European capital, great and small, viewed with dismay the maritime supremacy of England, and feared that the continent was becoming England's economic vassal. The dissipation of this last fear was one of the major tasks Gentz had set for himself, and in the last seventy pages of his book *Von dem politischen Zustande von Europa* he again attempted to quash the notion that the British were exercising a "commercial tyranny."³¹

To bring into existence the hoped-for anti-French coalition was therefore, as Gentz very well realized, an undertaking fraught with tremendous difficulties. A change in leadership in every European capital was desperately needed, for, as he put it, "a remarkable coincidence of extraordinary men with extraordinary characters alone can organize, move, and lead the machinery of such a coalition."³² Let such leadership appear, however, let the envisaged coalition move against France, and the ground would be prepared for a restoration of that system of European states which Gentz looked upon as the most practical approximation of the ideal.

Gentz's conception of the European states system was not an empty abstraction; it derived from his interpretation of the related ideas of international law, balance of power, and the right of intervention. "International law" and "national sovereignty" are among the most pretentious terms in the language; yet both are so rooted in actuality that political theory cannot get along without them. From Machiavelli and Grotius to the present there have been, paradoxically, equal tendencies in both directions. Men who have favored the realization of genuine, dyed-in-the-wool Austinian sovereignty may be called nationalists or statists; men who have favored international law, not merely framed and interpreted but also enforced, may be called internationalists. Gentz

³¹ Gentz's articles in the *Historisches Journal* had been largely responsible for evoking the book called *De l'État de la France à la fin de l'an VIII* (Paris, 1801), by the very able official in the French foreign office, Count d'Hauterive. Gentz's *Von dem politischen Zustande von Europa* was his reply to D'Hauterive's criticism.

³² *Von dem politischen Zustande von Europa*, 261.

edges in with the internationalists. He did not believe that a legal world order would ever be completely realized, but this skepticism did not deter him from affirming that Europe as a whole was a confederation of a kind, that from the Peace of Westphalia on this confederate nature had been manifested in the development of a system of public law, and that the interests of the whole took precedence over those of any of its parts.

In the absence of a league of nations — a chimerical conception — this confederate Europe moved along with a maximum of practical efficiency through the application of the principle of balance of power — a principle whose origin and nature Gentz clearly explained: "Experience," he said, "has shown that most wars arose from the excessive overweight that one power or another knew how to create for itself under favorable conditions. From this experience statecraft came to the conclusion that if appropriate alliances, dexterous negotiations, or (when necessary) force, could stop the rise of such overweight — or neutralize it, in case it already had arisen — the peace and security of all must necessarily be materially benefited. . . . The aim was to organize the federative constitution of Europe so skillfully that every weight in the political mass would find somewhere a counterweight."³³ To create a confederate Europe, however, called for more than balance of power; it was necessary to encourage mutuality among nations. Balance of power was negative.

Gentz's talk about a federative Europe had its positive side, however. He declared that the principle that no state was competent to mix in the inner affairs of other states was an unwarranted generalization.³⁴ Both sound policy and international law, rightly interpreted, permitted a state to intervene in the internal affairs of another if conditions in that state were so disturbed as to endanger its neighboring countries.³⁵

The practical importance of Gentz's writings in 1800 and 1801 was that they emphasized principles that the Third Coalition was soon to accept, in large measure, as the official war aims in the struggle against Napoleon. If there was anything new in his principles, he himself refused to admit it. He talked always of restoring *old* principles — the

³³ *Historisches Journal*, 3 (1800):757, 758.

³⁴ *Ausgewählte Schriften von Friedrich von Gentz*, edited by Wilderich Weick (5 vols. in 3, Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1836–38), 2:195.

³⁵ *Von dem politischen Zustande von Europa*, 207, 208. It is likely that Gentz was influenced, or at least strengthened, in his convictions on the right of intervention by Burke's first "Letter on a Regicide Peace," in which the doctrine was ingeniously elaborated. Burke, *Works*, 2:242–243. Gentz said that he had been more impressed by this than by any of Burke's other writings. *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:224. See also Walter Alison Phillips, *The Confederation of Europe: A Study of the European Alliance, 1813–1823* (London, 1920), 41.

good old principles embodied in the treaties of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This appealed to the British Tories. Thus when the Russian czar, under the direct or indirect influence of Polish and Italian nationalists, began to talk about a *new* international law, a *new* confederation of Europe, a *new* balance of power based on national states, Pitt countered with Gentzian talk about the old international law, the old confederation of Europe, the old balance of power. The Russian hope of creating a new order gave way to the British determination to restore the old order: the official statement of war aims, contained in the treaties upon which the Third Coalition of 1805 was based, expressed more nearly the views of Pitt and Gentz than of the enthusiastic nationalists around the czar. When the Third Coalition collapsed, these war aims lived on. They formed the basis for the peace settlement of 1815.

There was one significant difference, however, between Gentz's views and those of the British: the British hesitated to give more than lip service to the right of intervention, which Gentz enunciated so forthrightly. In his famous note of January 19, 1805, to the Russian government Pitt stated his position with telltale vagueness: "the principal Powers of Europe," he said, ". . . should . . . provide, as far as possible, for repressing future attempts to disturb the general tranquillity."³⁶ This diplomatic language only partially concealed the fundamental difference of opinion between England and Russia on the positive character of a confederation of Europe. The difference was destined to cause great difficulty in the future. Gentz's position on intervention was closer to the Russian view than to the British.

Another matter which Gentz treated in his writings of 1800 and 1801 is of especial interest in the light of its relation to the war aims enunciated by the Third Coalition and carried out by the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Though Gentz had once declared that at the outbreak of the Revolution "the balance of power was as correctly and advantageously adjusted as any fair statecraft . . . could wish it to be,"³⁷ he did not really believe this to be so. Even if it were possible, an exact restoration of the old boundaries was not desirable. He declared that

³⁶ Quoted by Hildegard Schaefer in *Die Dritte Koalition und die Heilige Allianz* (Königsberg and Berlin, 1934), 36. This excellent monograph, which supersedes earlier works on the subject, demonstrates in convincing fashion the influence of the Italian liberal and nationalist, Piattoli, upon Czartoryski, and hence upon Russian war aims as elaborated in 1804 and 1805. I do not know whether further research would show that Gentz influenced Pitt's formulation of British war aims or not. I have merely sought to show the degree to which Pitt's position in 1805 paralleled that taken by Gentz in 1800 and 1801. It is certain that Gentz's books enjoyed a wide circulation in England, and that in 1802 he had an opportunity to talk at length with Pitt's leading supporters.

³⁷ *Von dem politischen Zustande von Europa*, 90.

Europe would be better off if the Great Powers engulfed the small, and he argued that this would be "a powerful step toward the realization of a general system of peace." Although neither the partition policy of the eighteenth century nor the Revolution could be legally justified, he believed that they had benefited Europe by reducing the number of small states; and he did not wish to see this good work undone. In the formulation of these views Gentz had undoubtedly been influenced by a remarkable book, *La Prusse et sa neutralité*, by the Abbé de Pradt. An *émigré* at this time, De Pradt was soon to be won over by Bonaparte, and for two decades Gentz was to tear his hair over every subsequent book that issued from the Abbé's pen. This earlier work, however, was different: indeed Gentz said that it ought to be "the handbook of every thoughtful statesman."³⁸ After calling for a restoration of the balance of power, De Pradt expressed the hope of seeing Holland and Belgium united and Piedmont enlarged, so that a series of barrier states would be thrown up against France.

These views on the territorial reorganization of Europe, advocated by De Pradt and approved by Gentz, were likewise accepted as war aims by the Third Coalition and realized by the Vienna settlement of 1815.

The British government had reason to feel that its subsidies to Gentz in 1801 had been well spent. It had received a statement of the objectives of the war against Napoleon to which it could give almost unqualified approval. What is more, that statement was from the pen of an author who could reach a wider public than any English political writer.³⁹

³⁸ *Historisches Journal*, 3 (1800):728, 737, note.

³⁹ On the translation and reception of these works of 1800 and 1801 abroad, see: *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:258; Gentz to Stuart, August 4, 1802, in the collection privately owned by Mr. André de Coppet of New York; *The Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, edited by Charles Francis Adams (12 vols., Philadelphia, 1874-77), 1:244; *The Edinburgh Review or Critical Journal for April, 1803 . . . July, 1803*, 2:1-30 (New York, 1813); *The Life and Times of Henry Lord Brougham Written by Himself*, 1:184 (New York, 1871).

6. The Close of a Period

DURING 1801 all Europe settled down somewhat suspiciously to enjoy peace, but Gentz expressed himself before the public more belligerently than ever. "Ministers, ambassadors, and princes" continued to devote a flattering attention to his counsels,¹ and he tingled with heady exhilaration at having "arrived" socially; but for all that it was clear that highest Prussian officialdom regarded him with cold disapproval. The withdrawal of government support from his *Journal* augured ill for the future, and in the back of his mind lurked always the question: After 1801, what?

Gentz's own conduct did not invite a reassuring answer to this question, from Berlin at least. He was in the grip of a wild restlessness that brought him night after night to the gambling table, and the mornings found him wheedling at the doors of skeptical creditors. His wife tried bravely to face the situation, but her determination to keep their relations on a plane of polite and refined behavior only created for Gentz an atmosphere of domestic desolation.

In September, after a heart-to-heart talk with Humboldt, Gentz concluded that the time had come for him to seek his fortune elsewhere. His thoughts turned inevitably to Weimar, Germany's literary haven, where his brother Heinrich, the architect, had been commissioned to build the grand duke's *Schloss*, and where Humboldt's intimate connections might be turned to good account. In October Gentz confidentially informed Froelich, his publisher and creditor, of his intention to leave Berlin; he also told Froelich that legal action to collect the money owed him would be useless, since the Gentz exchequer was empty. Yet in the interval between this admission of bankruptcy and his actual departure on an exploratory excursion to Weimar, Gentz lost in two

¹ Gentz to Froelich, March 4[?], 1801, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 94, IV, N.b.2, Fol. 49.

evenings 144 louis d'or at gambling parties conducted by O'Farrill, the Spanish ambassador.²

Gentz undertook the journey to Weimar with high hopes: "It is going to decide, more or less, my future fate," he assured Froelich. The way had been smoothed out for him by Humboldt, who had praised him to the skies in generous letters to Goethe and Schiller. Weimar responded with a flattering reception: a performance of *Wallenstein* was presented especially for him; he was dined by the duke; Goethe entertained him at a soiree attended by Wieland, Herder, and Schiller. Yet in spite of all this attention, Weimar at first left him cold. He found the conversation at Goethe's "almost insipid." Closer acquaintance with Schiller, however, convinced him that here at least was a great man; a conversation tête à tête on the last day of the sojourn drew from Gentz the observation that it was "the most sustained and the most profound" that he recalled ever having had.³

Gentz remained two weeks in Weimar; but he was not invited to join permanently the duke's literary galaxy. The journey had been a memorable one, however, and for a reason quite different from any he had foreseen. At a social gathering the prologue of Schiller's *Jean d'Arc* had been dramatized to entertain the guests. The leading part was taken by one of the ladies in waiting at the ducal court, Amalie von Imhof, a minor poetess who had won some renown with her *Sisters of Lesbos*, published two years before. Fräulein von Imhof was what is known as a superior woman; she was twenty-five years old, intelligent, good, and just the person to sweep a rake with a Calvinist background off his feet. Gentz fell in love, headlong, precipitously. Every morning he went eagerly to the Imhof house. I am "astonished at myself and at all the strength which I have found again in my soul," he noted in his diary. "Never in my life," he wrote some three years later, "had I found such strength, such talent, and such power of speech in myself as in the memorable hours I passed with her in the evening. My fire, my passion, my inexpressible exaltation swept her by storm. I dared not give utterance to anything like a positive proposal: I was married, in debt, enmeshed by a thousand chains and bonds; it was madness to strive for the possession of such an angel. All the same, my burning desires streamed out before her — and she did not repulse them. It was decided

² Doeber, *Heinrich Gentz*, 55-61; Gentz to Froelich, October 13, 1801, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 94, IV, N.b.2, Fol. 49; *Tagebücher*, 1:4, 5.

³ Gentz to Froelich, November 13, 1801, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 94, IV, N.b.2, Fol. 49; Albert Leitzmann, ed., "Ein Empfehlungsbrief von W. von Humboldt an Schiller für Gentz," in *Festschrift: Alex. Cartellieri* (Weimar, 1927), 72, 73; Bratranek, *Goethe's Briefwechsel*, 173; *Tagebücher*, 1:7-14.

and settled between us that I should henceforth work unceasingly for my release, and although she promised me nothing for certain, any more than I dared ask of her anything for certain, nevertheless we were manifestly bound by a secret and tacit agreement."

Gentz felt that a new era had begun for him. When finally he saw the gates of Weimar behind him, it was after a parting made sweet by "the mutual conviction that the possibility of uniting our destinies lay before us." Four days later, as he neared Berlin, his reluctance to end a vacation of such perfection caused him to pull up at a cabaret in a village just outside the city, where he reread all Amalie's poems and wrote her a letter of many pages. "The impression of the journey to Weimar will, I hope, last eternally," he wrote in his diary.⁴

Berlin seemed particularly somber after the ecstasies of Weimar. Prospects for the future were worse than ever. At home the genteel frigidity gave way to exasperating feuds. In spite of a thousand good resolutions Gentz succumbed to the old lure of the gambling table, and on December 24, having lost all he had, he hustled around trying to scrape up money for Christmas presents.⁵

In his condition of emotional stress Gentz associated more and more with a group of sensation-hunters of whom Prince Louis Ferdinand was the guiding spirit. And seductive hetaerae like Pauline Wiesel, whose abandon and gay audacity had attracted many men before Gentz, were anything but uncooperative. In the winter of 1801-02 this circle was enriched by the accession of the vivacious little Jewess, Rahel Levin. Rahel had intelligence. A man could talk to her, which was more than could be said of most Berlin women of the time. Rahel was also a firm believer in love; she was, in fact, a sort of specialist in love and particularly in Rahel-love, which was something high, noble, and beyond the capacity of ordinary men, as she was to learn from bitter experience. Poor mismatched Gentz, having scaled the amatory heights at Weimar, could readily verify by his own experience that no escape for a troubled soul equaled that offered by the sweet miseries of love. Through Rahel he met one Christel Eigensatz, an actress, who had momentarily all the requisites.⁶

Frau Minna Gilly Gentz had stood a good deal, but Christel Eigensatz was the last straw. Through March Gentz continued to appear occasionally in public with his wife, but the affair with the Eigensatz was attaining the proportions of a public scandal. For three stormy

⁴ *Ibid.*, 14-16; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:238-239.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 80, 81; *Tagebücher*, 1:18.

⁶ Wahl, *Louis Ferdinand*, 175, 178-179; *Tagebücher*, 1:5, 18; *Aus Nostitz' Leben*, 83.

months husband and wife avoided an open breach, but Gentz was making himself impossible. He spent the night occasionally with the actress, his diary records, but she, faithless creature, produced another and more favored lover named Zinnow. Then "the devil broke loose," until Gentz cooled off and diverted Zinnow's attention by bringing forth the acquiescent Pauline Wiesel. Gentz and Zinnow then became boon companions. They stuffed themselves with food and drink at the Stadt Paris, they reeled through the streets of Berlin boisterous with whiskey, they tossed their money away at a game called *Tarock*. Except in the circle of Prince Louis Ferdinand, Gentz found himself a social outcast. By the end of April he had come to the conclusion that he needed desperately another change of scenery.⁷

On April 28 he applied for three months' leave from his "official duties." His health was bad, he complained; the gout gave him no relief, and he desired to visit the libraries of Göttingen, Gotha, and Weimar for the "completion of a work of large proportions on some of the most important aspects of contemporary history." It is doubtful whether Gentz was more than half serious about this historical project. His studies on the French Revolution he had dropped several years ago, and he was certainly no longer enthusiastic about them. "Everything in the world," he told Brinckmann, "strikes me as highly insipid, and I appear to myself as a burnt-out Vulcan." Still he needed some excuse to get out of Berlin, and in Weimar there was not only a library but also Amalie von Imhof.⁸

Until February Gentz had carried on a correspondence of "indescribable warmth and vitality" with Amalie, but in "the feverish confusion and madness" of his affair with Christel her image had left him. News of his wild life had penetrated to Weimar, and Amalie, to a question by the Duchess Louise about Gentz, could only reply: "He knows that I take lively interest in his lot. He is an exceedingly interesting and remarkable character, and it is certain that he has most accurately recognized my nature: with one look he was at home with me. On this, perhaps, he has built false hope. . . . I should like him to remain close to me as a person, as a friend. For he is not one of those people who arouse only a momentary interest. I should not want to lose sight of his destiny, for I am convinced that there is extraordinary strength in him. But he lacks harmonious development and the

⁷ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:92; *Tagebücher*, 1:18-20.

⁸ Bailieu, "Zur Verabschiedung des Kriegsrats Gentz," in *Festschrift Schmoller*, 239-240; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:93.

deeper, moral stability of soul. Enough of this pirate.”⁹ Amalie undoubtedly had been deeply hurt by Gentz’s conduct, but she was still receptive.

The project of another journey to Weimar was heartily vetoed, however, by Gentz’s nominal and now thoroughly exasperated chief, Voss. Gentz’s leave from departmental duties had been granted for the year 1801 only. It was now April, 1802, and Voss, not without reason, felt that Gentz should at least have asked for further leave, if he intended to draw pay but to do no work. To Gentz’s request Voss therefore replied bluntly that whether he was in Berlin or Weimar Gentz was equally useless to the South Prussian department. Why, he asked, did not Gentz do them the favor of turning in his resignation?¹⁰

The gauntlet had been thrown down, and Gentz picked it up. He decided to clear up his affairs as best he could, ask his wife for a divorce, and leave the country. His finances, it is needless to say, were in the greatest disorder. On February 8 he had been glad to translate for Froelich some English letters on the peace with France for a paltry twenty thaler. Later in the month “a fairly large sum” arrived from the British government, and in April Lord Carysfort turned over to him no less than a thousand pounds. But to finance his journey in June he had to beg money from his father.¹¹

By the time his plans for departure had matured, Gentz’s prospects were somewhat brighter, though still none too promising. Count Stadion, the Austrian ambassador in Berlin, with whom Gentz had been on terms of intimacy since the preceding summer, had been quietly won over to the idea that Gentz would be a useful acquisition for the Viennese government and had agreed to push Gentz’s cause at the Habsburg court. This was much more attractive than the libraries and Weimar; but a negotiation of this sort had to be handled with consummate care, and Gentz contented himself with the vague announcement that he was going “to Dresden and perhaps farther” and would be away for “about two months.”¹²

In the meantime some well-wisher had intervened in his behalf with his Prussian superiors. The exacting Voss reversed himself on the mat-

⁹ Henriette von Bissing, *Leben der Dichterin Amalie v. Helvig* (Berlin, 1889), 52–53.

¹⁰ Bailleu, “Zur Verabschiedung des Kriegrats Gentz,” in *Festschrift Schmoller*, 240–241.

¹¹ *Tagebücher*, 1:18–20; Gentz to Froelich, February 8, 11, 12, 1802, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 94, IV, N.b.2, Fol. 49; Tschirch, *Geschichte der öffentlichen Meinung*, 2:23, 24 and note. Gentz’s brothers also gave him financial assistance. Doeber, *Heinrich Gentz*, 53.

¹² *Tagebücher*, 1:4; August Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl: Geschichte der österreichischen Diplomatie in den Jahren 1801–1805* (Vienna, 1880), 59–64; Gentz to Froelich, June 10, 1802, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 94, IV, N.b.2, Fol. 49. See also Bailleu, “Zur Verabschiedung des Kriegrats Gentz,” in *Festschrift Schmoller*, 244–250.

ter of Gentz's resignation and recommended that he be granted leave for three months. To this the king agreed, but with the clear stipulation that upon his return Gentz should resume the full departmental duties of a Prussian civil servant.¹³ On June 17, after a "celestial night" with Christel Eigensatz, Gentz threw himself into preparations for the journey, and on the twentieth he took his leave. His bridges had not been burned behind him, but never again was he to set eye on Berlin. He carried with him the curious project of translating Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme*: "I have," he said, "special reasons for putting this book into German."¹⁴

Gentz was not the only one, by any means, to set forth on a journey in the late spring of the year 1802. The signing of the Peace of Amiens on March 26 gave Europe a general respite after a decade of war; and though this peace, as Gentz admitted, was "not so lovely as the neck of Fräulein Arnstein" and perhaps "uglier than Madame Divoff," it at least gave Europeans with money to spend their first opportunity for a long time to go sight-seeing. Most of these tourists flocked to Paris, where there are reported to have been sixteen thousand Englishmen and four thousand other foreigners at one time during the summer.¹⁵

Gentz, who cared little for sight-seeing but who was much interested in men, would no doubt have enjoyed gaping at the Corsican dictator, as so many of his compatriots were doing that summer. But stern necessity having called him in the opposite direction, he did the best he could: at Dresden debonair young Clemens von Metternich, the Austrian minister to the Saxon court, received him with cordial good will, and Gentz "spent at his house the most agreeable hours" of his sojourn in the city. At his next stop, Teplitz, the fashionable Bohemian resort, he found "one of the most handsome, most elegant, most pleasant men" he had ever seen, old Prince de Ligne, the embodiment of the eighteenth-century aristocracy at its best. With his store of letters of recommendation from Stadion augmented by more from Metternich and the Prince de Ligne, and with the offer of the latter's great house as his headquarters during his stay in Vienna, Gentz entered the Habsburg capital with high hopes of taking the Hofburg by storm.¹⁶

¹³ *Ibid.*, 241-243.

¹⁴ *Tagebücher*, 1:20-21; Gentz to Froelich, June 10, 1802, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 94, IV, N.b.2, Fol. 49.

¹⁵ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:91; Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, 6:240-241.

¹⁶ August Fournier, *Historische Studien und Skizzen* (3 vols., Vienna and Leipzig, 1908-12), 2:116, 118; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:364-365; Louis Wittmer, "Le Prince de Ligne, Jean de Müller, Frédéric de Gentz, et l'Autriche," in *Annales Prince de Ligne*, 5 (1924):250-251 and note.

Estimates of Vienna's population at about the time Gentz entered its gates vary from 232,000 to 325,000. The city was compact by even eighteenth-century standards; architecturally it made Gentz think of a huge monastery. He was depressed by the sensation of being closed in upon by the buildings, stifled by the heat, choked by the dust, and nauseated by the everlasting stench. The great boulevard of today, the Ring, belonged yet, by half a century, to the future; on its site loomed the ancient wall, a mass of masonry two stories high, used as a promenade but lacking only "embrasures, cannon, and piles of ammunition" to give it the appearance of an effective bulwark against an unwelcome visit from Turk or Frenchman. Between the wall and the outer system of fortifications—the present-day Gürtel—were suburbs confined largely to the dwellings of lowly workers, but out beyond these ramparts lay attractive villages where prosperous burghers had built pleasant cottages with delightful gardens round about.¹⁷

This Vienna was dominated socially, as the monarchy was dominated politically, by an ultra-aristocratic clique of magnates, more cosmopolitan in their origins than the Habsburg state itself. The greatest of these bore the title of prince. Their magnificent baroque town houses; their famous art galleries; their splendid private orchestras, which employed Haydns and produced Liszts; their vast estates, where open house was kept "to the extent that it became the equivalent to what a modern hotel would be were its owner a philanthropist"; their gorgeous balls during the winter season, at which all varieties of wine were dispensed without stint, and at which one hundred and fifty pounds of butter and two thousand eggs were consumed in the course of an evening—all these extravagances bore witness to the fact that in Austria a lush but superannuated feudalism was still, in 1802, in full swing.¹⁸

The vast majority of Austrian subjects lived in agricultural communities that were largely self-sustaining. Meagerly educated, accustomed to a regime that gave them no voice in their government, they were stolidly indifferent to large affairs of state. The middle class was still insignificant in numbers and influence, and the few intellectuals more often adhered to an eighteenth-century political philosophy that stressed

¹⁷ Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 118, note; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:96–97 and note; Bruford, *Germany in the Eighteenth Century*, 98; W. Alexis, *Wiener Bilder* (Leipzig, 1833), 54–56.

¹⁸ Oskar Criste, *Feldmarschall Johannes Fürst von Liechtenstein* (Vienna, 1905), 172–177, 251–253; *Carl Bertuchs Tagebuch vom Wiener Kongress*, edited by Hermann Freiherr von Egloffstein (Berlin, 1916), 22–23; Sacheverell Sitwell, *Liszt* (Boston, 1934), 4; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:143; vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 12.

the similarities of nations than to a new order emphasizing national peculiarities and national destinies.

The disintegrating forces inherent in the nature of the state were not so evident to men in 1802 as they became a half century later. But a decade more or less continuously devoted to warlike endeavor had strained every portion of the body politic, and by the treaties of Campo Formio and Lunéville Austria had lost considerable territory; more important, her influence in Germany and Italy had suffered seriously. Still she remained a power in European affairs. From the river Adige in the west one might travel some seven hundred miles to the east without leaving land belonging to the House of Austria; and though haphazardly assembled and haphazardly ruled, the realm retained an astonishing vitality.

Government as such centered in a monarch with absolute power, who was served by the small and closely knit group of aristocratic and opulent nobles and by a carefully regimented body of petty officials. The emperor Francis had been on the throne since 1792. Mediocre in every respect, he departed from the ordinary only in the length of his reign, which lasted until the year 1835.

The governmental organization of the various eighteenth-century absolutisms had much in common. In Austria the emperor had been provided with a council of theoretically able and trusted advisers known as the *Staatsrat*, and his will was theoretically carried out through executive departments known as court offices, or *Hofstellen*, with the heads of which he conferred at intervals. Early in the reign of Francis the *Staatsrat*, which was supposed to fulfill an essential advisory function, had become moribund. As a result the emperor came to rely chiefly on his former tutor, Count Francis Colloredo, who was anything but a brilliant man. Colloredo had been entrusted with a number of offices, which enabled him to act as intermediary between the emperor and most of the organs of government. This system forced the emperor to handle a tremendous amount of detail, but since inconsequential routine was his forte, Francis enjoyed his duties.¹⁹

Critics had not been lacking to assail the unwieldiness and ineffec-

¹⁹ The best account of the Austrian government at this period is that by Count F. von Hartig, "The Genesis of the Revolution in Austria," reprinted conveniently in translation in volume 4 of W. Coxe's *History of the House of Austria* (London, 1862). Ignaz Beidtel in volume 2 of his *Geschichte der oesterreichischen Staatsverwaltung, 1740-1848*, edited by Alfons Huber (Innsbruck, 1896-98), quotes entire pages from Hartig and gives him credit. Johann Mailáth, in volume 5 of *Geschichte des oesterreichischen Kaiserstaates* (Hamburg, 1850), also quotes entire pages, but without proper acknowledgment to Hartig.

tiveness of the entire system. Chief among them was Francis' brother, Archduke Carl, one of the few able men produced by the House of Habsburg during its centuries of prominence in European affairs. Not only was he the best general in the monarchy: he displayed statesmanlike qualities superior to his military talents. If the archduke had been allowed to have his way in the determination of policy, he would have been spared needless humiliation on the battlefield. Court intrigue had not yet hamstrung him, however, and in 1801 he had successfully pushed through a reorganization of the government whereby the *Staatsrat* gave way to a *Staatskonferenz*, composed of the ministers of foreign affairs, war, and interior, three councilors, and a secretary. This *Staatskonferenz* was designed to relieve the emperor of his burden of routine and to facilitate generally the working of a government which had bogged down badly. From the point of view of personalities the change represented an ascendancy of Carl over Colloredo, although Colloredo's power was still considerable.

For one thing Colloredo remained the nominal head of the Department of Foreign Affairs, although the real direction rested in the hands of the vice-chancellor, Louis Cobenzl. History has not been kind to Cobenzl, but he was not without his attractive features. Says Vehse, accidentally lapsing from fiction into near-fact: "He was rather an agreeable and shrewd courtier than a statesman fitted to be the first minister of a great monarchy like Austria." Three months before Gentz arrived in Vienna Napoleon had written with satisfaction: "More than ever, disunion exists between Berlin and Vienna."²⁰ He was taking advantage of this happy circumstance to reorganize Germany and Italy as he pleased. Cobenzl would have liked to offset the French influence in central Europe by an alliance with Russia, but on June 3, 1802, the Russians had been won by the wily French to an agreement on Germany. The arrangement had been made in such secrecy that nothing was known of it in Vienna until June 29. "The despair of the Viennese statesmen, as they became aware of the full extent of the catastrophe which had befallen them challenges description," says a historian of the period. "Bonaparte . . . has seduced Prussia . . . Russia . . . made his peace with England," Cobenzl was wailing on July 6.²¹

Cobenzl was thus in a mood to clutch at straws in the wind when

²⁰ E. Vehse, *Memoirs of the Court and Aristocracy of Austria*, translated by Franz Demmler (2 vols., London, 1906), 2:350; *Correspondance de Napoléon*, 7:428.

²¹ Harold C. Deutsch, *The Genesis of Napoleonic Imperialism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1938), 58.

Friedrich Gentz appeared in Vienna. Flourishing his letters of introduction, Gentz made straightway for the office of the vice-chancellor. Yes, Gentz knew that the friendship of all the Great Powers had been momentarily lost by Austria, but there was another power that perhaps the Herr Minister had overlooked: had the Herr Minister considered sufficiently the power of public opinion, and of the possibilities of swaying that opinion through the power of the pen, his, Friedrich Gentz's, pen? Cobenzl was impressed. To Colloredo he wrote on August 5: "We have only too often experienced how much influence public opinion has upon the formation of policy; it is therefore essential that we should not neglect the agencies of operating upon public opinion." He went on to recommend that Friedrich Gentz, "the best political writer in Germany," should be taken into the Austrian service at an annual salary of three thousand florins, with an additional pension of five hundred florins. Colloredo's indecision was Gentz's first setback. While Colloredo tried to make up his mind whether or not he would present Cobenzl's recommendation to the emperor, Gentz languished disconsolate. "Don't come to Vienna in the summer," he warned his friend Brinckmann. "You may show up armed with the best recommendations there ever were, but you will be damned to succumb to boredom. All the great houses are empty; everyone who isn't chained in irons to the town lives in the country, and generally far, inaccessibly far, from Vienna. The few who remain behind keep their houses hermetically sealed and look upon every visit, or better, every attempt at a visit, which a stranger tries, as *non-avenue*. In short they leave you alone with . . . the terrible, tasteless food, eight hundred hackney cabs, thirty thousand loungers, the anything-but-gay Prater . . . three or four very ordinary theaters, the coffeehouses, which are abominable *ad nauseam*, and several thousand trivial, abysmally stupid, cold, and thoroughly useless joy girls."²²

Gentz had good grounds for dejection. After several days' hesitation Colloredo finally agreed to join Cobenzl in presenting a memorandum to the emperor recommending Gentz's employment. The emperor, however, turned down the proposal, though he expressed a willingness to pay Gentz for what he should from time to time write "in accordance with his conviction for the Good Cause." Prospects appeared most unpromising, but Gentz had found supporters who were loyal, persistent, and influential. Archduke Carl, urged on by his favored adviser Fasbender, joined forces with Cobenzl, and once again Colloredo was

²² Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 191-193; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:96, 97, 365.

moved to lay a memorandum before the emperor, without, however, giving it his own support. In spite of this very lukewarm attitude, Colloredo arranged for Gentz to have an audience with the emperor a few days later. The emperor "tried to say some obliging things" but made it quite clear that he was not inclined to take Gentz into his service. Cobenzl, however, was not yet licked. He countered immediately with new representations in Gentz's behalf, and Colloredo finally agreed to give the matter his definite support. At last, on September 6, 1802, the emperor relented. Without enthusiasm he assigned to Gentz the title of Imperial Counselor, a pension of four thousand florins a year, and no official duties whatever except that "he continue to write for the Good Cause." These glad tidings were conveyed to Gentz by Cobenzl, with the reminder that he would be his "overseer and his very exacting overseer," Colloredo voiced again the complaint that he disliked foreigners and especially Prussians, and the thing was done: Gentz had switched sovereigns.²³

The spirits of the late-depressed man bounded: "Vienna . . . has apparently decided my fate, and decided it forever," he wrote. "*My role is not yet played out!* I know now that I still ought to do great things; and even though heaven and earth stand against me, I will do them . . . The conditions under which I enter upon this career are so advantageous that I . . . see before me, with ordinary luck, one of the most important and one of the most interesting roles that Europe now has to offer . . . You cannot imagine how full my head is of ideas and plans. I have not been so enthusiastic and active for a long time. Should a war break out *anywhere* in Europe, you may simply believe that I have started it. Peace can and must not prevail so long as unpunished crime reigns. I prefer to see the world in flames than to watch it sink down into this deadly marasmus."²⁴

These fighting words indicate that Gentz was eager for a fray in the realm of high politics, but when it came to adjusting his own personal affairs he cringed and shuddered. In Berlin everything that concerned him had been left dangling, and although the people in Vienna wanted "to hold him by the hair," he succeeded in getting a leave of two months to straighten matters out. There was the formal break to be made with the Prussian government, there was the question of his debts, there were certain household arrangements which involved his wife and fam-

²³ Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 194-202; *Tagebücher*, 1:22; Fournier, *Studien und Skizzen*, 2:126; Paul Jacubenz, "Gentz und Fasbender," in *Mitteilungen des kaiserlichen und königlichen Kriegsarchivs*, 7 (1911):66, 70.

²⁴ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:367-371.

ily. With dragging feet and many misgivings Gentz started forth in September to wind up these distasteful obligations. He got only as far as Dresden. There, in the diplomatic circle that he had found so congenial a few weeks before, he became better acquainted with Hugh Elliot, the British minister. Elliot was about to return to England, and quite unexpectedly he proposed that Gentz accompany him. Delighted with an excuse to keep away from Berlin, Gentz accepted the invitation with alacrity. Straightway he sat down and asked by letter for his release from the Prussian service, having concluded, by the easy process of rationalization, that a trip to Berlin would be merely embarrassing and of no practical value so far as his debts and other personal affairs were concerned. He was careful to let the rumor circulate, however, that he intended to pay what he owed when he had the money, and certain mysterious references convey the hint that he expected to have the money when he returned from England: "This trip is much less ridiculous than it may appear," he assured a friend.²⁵

Count Cobenzl was justifiably nettled when he heard of this *fait accompli* with which his protégé had presented him. He thought that Gentz might at least have informed him of his plans before setting forth on an extended junket to foreign parts. Gentz himself realized that he was doing a presumptuous thing, and that the friends who had fought so valiantly for him in Vienna would think he had let them down. He wrote in extended justification of himself, not only to Cobenzl but also to Fasbender, Starhemberg, Landriani, and Stadion. "I promised them all that I would be back in Dresden by December 1, and I will keep my word," he declared on September 30. And except for a small matter of six weeks, he did keep his word.²⁶

On October 1, having secured one hundred pounds sterling from Metternich and having won two hundred thaler from a new and soon intimate Swedish friend, Baron Armfeldt, Gentz set forth for the England he so long had admired from afar. He journeyed by Weimar, where he halted four days, borrowing forty louis d'or from the duke and renewing his friendship with the "most heavenly among mortals," Amalie von Imhof. The months since the previous November had pro-

²⁵ *Tagebücher*, 1:23; Fournier, *Studien und Skizzen*, 2:124-125; Jacubenz, "Gentz und Fasbender," in *Mitteilungen des kaiserlichen und königlichen Kriegsarchivs*, 7:71-73; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 5:17-21; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:370; Gentz to Stuart, October 14, 1802, in the De Coppet collection, New York.

²⁶ Karl Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Friedrich von Gentz: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Oesterreichs im neunzehnten Jahrhundert mit Benutzung handschriftlichen Materials* (Leipzig, 1867), 29; Fournier, *Studien und Skizzen*, 2:128; A. Count Thürheim, *Ludwig Fürst Starhemberg* (Graz, 1889), 110.

vided a good many embarrassing topics which might have caused trouble, but he and Amalie got on famously, since their conversations carefully avoided anything personal.²⁷

The journey from Weimar to England, via Frankfurt, the Rhine, Aachen, Brussels, and Calais, is documented completely by letters of great interest. The cost of hiring a boat on the Rhine; the condition of the inns; the hints of friction with Elliot, the witty but tyrannical traveling companion; Gentz's terror when the boat stalled at the rapids near St. Goar (he got out and walked); his boredom at "the monotony of the Rhine Valley's everlastingly high mountains, with the perpetual sorry ruins at their tops, and the decayed, and thoroughly gloomy towns and villages at their feet" — these little details are all there. Most striking is Gentz's revelation of the surge of instinctive German patriotism that he experienced at his first contact with actual French control all along the Left Bank. No Arndt needed to suggest to him that the Rhine was Germany's stream, and not Germany's boundary; he felt it in every fiber of his being. The sight of the incomparable Talma on the Brussels stage moved him to reflect on Germany's lack of such an actor and brought him to a completely political and nationalistic conclusion. Germany too might have her Talma, he averred, if she but had "a capital, a central point, if we — without doubt the foremost people of the earth — but had some point in space or time where we could reveal our united strength and our united splendor, if we could but concentrate on some great objective of life or of art."²⁸

Gentz's first reaction to England was that here was a country that possessed all the requisites for the production of the Talmas of this world. "In this paradise of Europe, in this garden of God . . . there is nothing isolated," he proclaimed. "Everything hangs together; everything is linked, connected, wed, fused together — I lack for words expressive of this *totality*, this remarkable *ensemble*. . . . England's real greatness derives from this harmonious completeness. . . . This greatness will be perceived at once, through all his senses, by the alert observer who is properly prepared, and properly disposed; he sees it, he hears it, he feels it, he breathes it in the air."²⁹

Gentz luckily had arrived in England at a moment when it was possible for him to breathe its spirit in exceedingly rarified air, politically speaking. Except for Pitt, who remained at Bath in discreet semi-retirement, the governing cliques were assembling in London en masse

²⁷ *Tagebücher*, 1:23; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:101, 240, 373.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 373-387. ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 387, 392.

for the opening of Parliament. Through the translations of his books Gentz's name had become well known among these people, and he was welcomed everywhere with open arms, save by the extremists and by the Whig circle of Fox, Sheridan, and Grey. "His reception in London has certainly been more universally favorable than that of perhaps any other private foreigner who ever visited this capital," declared the *Courier* on December 18, quoting the *Morning Post*. "But its universality is a sufficient proof, that it depends on personal merit, and just celebrity, without any mixture of secret political views. . . . Lansdowne-house and Devonshire-house have been as open to him as Downing Street. There is no need of any mysterious cause to explain why Englishmen of all parties should shew their gratitude to the ablest defender of England, nor why the country of Adam Smith should shew her admiration of the greatest political economist in Europe." "This civility," echoed the *Morning Chronicle*, "is nothing more than a grateful return for the service which this author has done to the English nation. . . . To treat such a foreigner with every attention is the duty of the leading men among us, to prove that we are not insensible to the services of those, who have lent their aid to defend our national character, and to support the fabric of our publick prosperity." The *Times* and the *Star* added their plaudits, and Cobbett used the occasion to quote Gentz at length and with august approval in his journal. Baron Raigersfeld, the Austrian chargé in London, reported to his government: "Mr. de Gentz . . . enjoys such a reputation in this country that not only have the most notable people of all parties pressed forward to make his acquaintance, but Their Majesties themselves have manifested a desire to see him at court." "It strikes me as amusing, frequently, that I am treated here as of such great importance," Gentz confessed.³⁰

Particularly must this have struck him in view of the fact that he made no secret of his vast preference for the policies of the late Pitt government over those of Addington's. The Pitt cabinet had started the flow of English gold into the Gentz exchequer, but the Addington cabinet, though it continued the financial support, was responsible for the Peace of Amiens. True, this peace had also received the tacit support of the Pitt party, but at the opening of Parliament in November, 1802, Lord Grenville, Pitt's foreign minister, and Windham, his minister for war, showed definite signs of opposition. Gentz heartily approved their parliamentary crusade, which, if successful, would lead to a reopening of hostilities with France. Hence there was genuine admiration, in spite

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1:264-265, note; 2:102, 396, 398; Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 66, note.

of its apparent obsequiousness, in his apostrophe to Windham as the "successor of Burke; if not the only one, at least one of the last statesmen in the midst of general blindness." Gentz's partiality for those in the other camp did not prevent Addington and his foreign minister, Lord Hawkesbury, from treating him like a friend. He became personally acquainted, also, with Canning, Castlereagh, Lord Eldon, the Duke of Portland, Vansittart, James Mackintosh, William Cobbett, Francis Baring, and D'Ivernois, to name a few of the more prominent men. He was presented to the king and to the queen, had long conversations with the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Clarence. But the man who impressed him most favorably was the exiled Duke of Orleans, better known as Louis Philippe. "By his extraordinary mind and his extraordinary character," Gentz thought, "this single Bourbon compensates for the unfortunate weaknesses of three entire generations of Bourbons. . . . Among all the men whom I know this prince is the one who harmonizes most completely and thoroughly with my own political ideas; he is the one whose conversation is most instructive to me, from whom I have learned the most—even about England; and finally he is the one whom I admire and like the most, because of his fine and magnanimous spirit."³¹

Gentz would have liked to remain on the fascinating island for six months, perhaps permanently, but he had already overstayed his leave from Vienna, and the New Year found him back on the Continent. He glowed with satisfaction over the triumph he had experienced in the country where success meant the most to him. His was too simple a nature to screen a bubbling egotism behind the mask of false modesty, and his way homeward, via Brussels, Frankfurt, and Weimar, was strewn with the unguarded boastings of a childlike man. In two quarters, particularly, reports of his good luck roused resentment. His colleagues in the writing fraternity were jealous of his success in tapping the English government for larger subsidies than they had been able to get; for after this newest raid he was reputed to have returned with eight hundred good English pounds in his pocket. D'Ivernois went so far as to make inquiry at the British treasury itself; and though he dared not place his own "talent on a level with that of Mr. Gentz," he was dismayed that he, D'Ivernois, should be so meagerly rewarded after having worked "ten times as hard" as Mr. Gentz. The worthy Johannes Müller was also painfully affected by the news of the eight hundred pounds;

³¹ Gentz to Windham, London, November 11, 1802, in the British Museum, Add. 37869, f. 121; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:390.

and Böttiger remarked with superior purity: "Gentz does not appear to me to have brought an end to his erring ways. His Ithaca is now the Treasury at London." With Cobbett the remembrance of Gentz's success still rankled even after four years, as his letter to Windham clearly reveals: "There are many amongst those of the new opposition, as it was called, who *never* noticed me personally. They did not, I dare say, dream that I cared so little about it; and that when I saw them feting the pretender, Gentz, I looked on them with pity for the weakness of their preference rather than with envy towards Gentz."³²

In Berlin generally the news of Gentz's English triumph was received unfavorably. It was not merely that people there had erroneously supposed that his Prussian exit had been in the nature of a kick downstairs and that they were irked now by his phenomenal prestige abroad.³³ Irrespective of the English trip, well-disposed friends like Humboldt considered that Gentz had made a move really unworthy of himself in fleeing to Vienna. Wrote Humboldt: "I am sincerely sorry" that "Mr. Gentz has gone to serve at Vienna." He "ought not to leave the service of Prussia to enter into that of Austria."³⁴ People less fair-minded remembered his Berlin debts and asked with a leer what he was doing with the English gold. Some of the more pressing debts Gentz claims to have paid forthwith,³⁵ and later on in the year 1803, according to his diary, a certain Grattenauer, who had been entrusted with handling his affairs, received five thousand thaler with which to satisfy the more insistent creditors. Twelve years later it was still a piece of stock Berlin gossip that Gentz had irresponsibly ignored all the debts he had left behind him. To Varnhagen von Ense, Gentz then made the following explanation: "In the year 1803 when I for the first time found myself in the position to make an arrangement of my financial affairs, I sent six thousand Reichsthaler to the Commissioner of Justice Grattenauer for the preliminary payment of my creditors in Berlin. In accordance with my instructions he called together my vari-

³² Otto Karmin, *Sir Francis D'Ivernois, 1757-1842: sa vie, son oeuvre, et son temps* (Geneva, 1920), 413, 414; Wittmer, "Ligne, Müller, Gentz, et l'Autriche," in *Annales Prince de Ligne*, 5:315; Lewis Melville, *The Life and Letters of William Cobbett in England and America* (2 vols., London, 1913), 1:317-318. See also Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 228-229.

³³ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:106.

³⁴ *Wilhelm von Humboldt's politische Briefe*, edited by Wilhelm Richter (2 vols., Berlin and Leipzig, 1935-36), 1:11.

³⁵ This claim is substantiated by Gentz's letter of October 22, 1803, to Adam Müller. Greatly put out, Gentz wrote: "In July, 1802, I gave you twenty-six thaler with my own hand to pay the brother of the bookdealer Trorchel, and I emphasized that this was a matter of pressing importance. Nevertheless the bookdealer Trorchel and other creditors have sent bills for these sums. . . . I want a categorical explanation from you about this circumstance by return post." *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:413, 414.

ous creditors, but immediately afterward he went incredibly bankrupt. Thus, without the slightest fault on my part, the money and the hope given to my creditors was lost." Not until 1811, Gentz continues, was he in a position to begin payments anew.³⁶

With the evidence at hand, it is impossible to know the complete story of Gentz's settlement with his Berlin creditors.³⁷ Of one thing, however, there can be no doubt. Most of the debts were not paid for several years, and some of them were never paid at all. Berlin held that against Gentz.

Furthermore, at the height of his London triumph, his recently divorced wife died. This concatenation of events was unfortunate, to say the least, from the point of view of his Berlin reputation. Actually Gentz professed himself "deeply affected" by Minna's death, and there is no reason to doubt his sincerity. After their separation he had always assumed the most chivalrous attitude toward his wife. Before the English trip he had told Stadion that he still loved her and should always be deeply attached to her. "The unhappiness of this marriage resulted from the great difference not so much in our characters as in our tastes and in the way we regarded men, society, and all the things related to them. This unfortunate difference would not in itself have undermined our happiness if my wife had not always remained dependent, in a way, upon her parents, who, being infinitely more foreign than she to my way of life, my tastes, my connections, and my opinions, tormented her with indulgence and reduced her finally to a position where the dissolution of our marriage began to appear to her as a good thing. . . . What I am going to say to you will perhaps strike you as very singular: but it is none the less true that I never think of this woman that the tears do not choke me." A year after her death he told Lucchesini: "In spite of all the bitterness of a poorly matched marriage I have never ceased to be tenderly attached [to my wife] . . . and I still mourn her death as one of the saddest events of my life."³⁸

The news of his wife's death did not reach Gentz until his arrival in Weimar on his way back from England. There he passed four days, mainly in the company of his beloved Amalie von Imhof. She in the meantime had become engaged to "an exceedingly ordinary fellow," the Swedish Colonel Helvig. Gentz describes himself as being at the time

³⁶ *Tagebücher*, 1:29, 30; Gentz to Varnhagen von Ense, Paris, October 20, 1815, in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Varnhagen Nachlass.

³⁷ The several references to Grattenauer in Gentz's letters to Brinckmann during 1803 throw no direct light on the subject.

³⁸ *Tagebücher*, 1:24; Fournier, *Studien und Skizzen*, 2:123-124; Bailleu, "Zur Verabschiedung des Kriegsrats Gentz," in *Festschrift Schmoller*, 244-250.

"extremely sorrowful, serious, and highly receptive to everything good." And in his very first conversation with Amalie, he wrote later, "everything . . . broke out into the open. She told me that the thought of connecting herself with Helvig for life was frightful to her; she told me that she would not have listened for one minute to his proposals if all the hopes that she had placed in me had not gone to pieces. She spoke about me with a clarity, a depth, a fairness that set atingle all the fibers of my being. She had with such awful exactitude perceived the good and the bad in me, and judged my entire inner makeup in such an inexplicably discerning, and at the same time such an indescribably mild and tender and loving way, that it seemed to me as though I sat before the all-wise and all-benevolent Deity. The deep emotion in which all this put her, and the unmistakable signs of a great and deep-rooted inclination toward me, which were expressed in her every word, in each of her heavenly expressions, in each of her heavenly tears, awakened again in me all the feelings that her very first conversations had inspired. . . . The hope of possessing her seized my heart again, although in the magic of her presence . . . I could not conceal from myself the difficulties which stormed against this hope. I should at least have kept my yearnings to myself, but I was not strong enough; and from the moment that I gave expression to them, there was nothing to be done but to abandon myself to the natural course of our mutual feelings. Thus passed two days filled with indescribable happiness. On the twentieth of January we separated with the distinct agreement that the Helvig marriage should be regarded as fully suspended, and that as soon as I arrived in Vienna I should write to her about the possibility of carrying out our plan. . . . I arrived in Vienna—and have never written to her since. . . . A false shame, a faint-hearted timidity, a mean embarrassment kept me from making the explanation which I supposed my silence would express to her plainly enough. . . . I *could* not marry her. . . . It would have been wickedness and high treason on my part to hold her to her word. . . . That I should be damned, however, to deceive twice with false hopes a person whom I cannot think of even now after nearly two years without the deepest and most sacred veneration—this humiliated me to such an extent that I did not have the necessary courage to write."³⁹

Some of the persons who knew Gentz best have asserted that there was always something spurious about his moods of exaltation. Prince Louis Ferdinand claimed that his passion was always premeditated and

³⁹ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:240–242.

calculated: he coolly whipped himself into displays of fervor to make people believe that he was capable of great feeling. There was probably a measure of truth in this criticism. Metternich, who came to know Gentz as well as anyone, maintained also that his nature was essentially unromantic. From Gentz, however, came a self-analysis, just after the Weimar experience, which was perhaps fairer and more exact. "I am an infinitely receptive person," he wrote. "I am the first real woman who ever lived. This I know: if I had been a woman physically, I should have brought the earth to my feet. I have never *discovered* anything, never *produced* anything, never *made* anything. Notice this peculiarity: from myself alone I do not bring forth even the most miserable sparks; I am less electric than metal. But just for that reason I am, as no other, a conductor of electricity. My receptivity is unbounded." This analysis may furnish the key to the Amalie episode. When he was with her, he was electrified. But once away from her, he was just Gentz again, a Gentz who had "become too wise, too temperate, too poor, too exacting" for marriage, and for whom, besides, "the physical attractions of women" had lost their appeal. "I do not know whether I am capable of a great passion," he confessed some months later. "I believe not." And he continued: "I am mighty glad that I did not, like a miserable wretch, allow the passions to depart slowly from me; I 'raised myself from the table of life, a satisfied guest,' completely intoxicated, when I said good-by to Berlin."⁴⁰

As for Amalie von Imhof, we have only Gentz's word that she was ever in love with him and ready to marry him. A month after Gentz's departure she was mollifying Helvig with the words that she had never loved Gentz, that he was "anything but handsome," "not even prepossessing," and so far as she was concerned his personality rated "zero." However she went on to admit: "His soul, combined with his great power of understanding, does exert a stimulating influence over me." The evidence is by no means conclusive; it seems to indicate that Amalie was fascinated but frightened by the man whose "series of foolish actions brought confusion and unpleasantness not only to himself but also to those attached to him." After the first bitterness had left her she may have welcomed his silence and been glad to return to a somewhat stupid but dependable army officer.⁴¹ Some months later she became Frau von Helvig.

⁴⁰ Wahl, *Louis Ferdinand*, 208, 209; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:110, 113; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:151, 185.

⁴¹ Bissing, *Amalie v. Helvig*, 137-138.

From Weimar Gentz went to Dresden, where by prearrangement he met Adam Heinrich Müller, a young man fifteen years his junior with whom for six years he had become increasingly intimate. With fatherly solicitude Gentz had watched Müller's development into intellectual maturity. Müller, who was from the same bureaucratic circle in Berlin as Gentz himself, had gone to the university at Göttingen. After his return to Berlin his mind had begun to whirl with ideas—not with the rationalistic, common-sense ideas of Gentz's generation, but with the mystical-metaphysical ideas of the new generation of Schelling and Novalis. He was already obsessed with a characteristic concept of nineteenth-century German thought, the "Dialectic." This theory of change was believed to provide the key to the comprehension of reality: every phenomenon had its antagonistic, but complementary counterpart; their interaction constituted the basic life process, a *dialectical* process. "All life," elucidated Müller, "is living only in so far as the living stands over against it; it [life?] is enlivened only in so far as it may enliven, and it may enliven only in so far as it is enlivened."⁴²

Hegel and Marx were to perform remarkable tricks with the "Dialectic" before many years had passed; but neither of them ever displayed greater facility at pulling dialectical wherewithal out of his hat than did Adam Müller. For him oppositives—*Gegensätze*—cropped up everywhere; he possessed the willow wand for detecting the *Gegensatz*. Gentz's matter-of-fact mind never could grasp what it was all about. When Müller put himself on record in his *Die Lehre vom Gegensatz*, Gentz confessed that his mind was "too weak for this quick synthesis of apparently separated subjects. For you it is mere play to amalgamate in a trice Burke, Plato, Schelling, Novalis, the Apollo of Belvedere, the planets, God, and the *Gegensatz*, until the head of a person like me is likely to fall off. You are a poet, my dear friend. . . . I shall always admire your imagination, but to follow its flights I shall leave to those who are equipped with a *similar* imagination. I am incapable of it." Nevertheless Müller always had a tonic effect upon Gentz. "With all his . . . greatness Humboldt was only a weak forerunner of this true prophet," Gentz declared, and similar encomiums from his pen are to be found literally by the dozen. "I am a pre-Adamite," Varnhagen remarked caustically in 1812, "and hold the opinion that men

⁴² Adam Müller, *Die Lehre vom Gegensatz*, in *Ausgewählte Abhandlungen*, edited by Jakob Baxa (2d ed., Jena, 1931), 230. On the "Dialectic," as distinct from the dialectical argumentative method of Socrates and Plato, see Edmund Wilson, *To the Finland Station: A Study in the Writing and Acting of History* (New York, 1940), 179.

already existed before Müller, although Gentz asserts that he is the first."⁴³

Müller had a greater hold on Gentz than any other man or woman. In extraordinary measure he possessed the capacity to bring out a side of Gentz's nature the very existence of which was probably quite hidden from most of his friends. Müller called forth the religious in Gentz; he raised questions about the meaning of life and the significance of death which could sweep Gentz into moods of feverish enthusiasm.

The death of his wife and the cleansing effect of his contact with Amalie von Imhof had put Gentz in just the right frame of mind for Müller's purification of his emotions at Dresden. Müller was on the point of going over formally to the Catholic church, and under his insinuating influence Gentz went far in the same direction. Henceforth he was to occupy an almost Catholic position, although he was never able to reconcile the Christian revelation with his rationalistic preconceptions and consequently remained outside the fold.

With his mind at ease and with peace in his heart, Gentz resumed the journey to Vienna. At Prague he stopped long enough to cultivate the Bohemian nobility—the Lobkowitzes, Kinskys, Clams, Schlicks, Buquois', Sternbergs, Wilczcks, and Choteks. On February 16, 1803, after a memorable absence of five months, he was back once more at the Habsburg capital.⁴⁴

⁴³ *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 171, 172; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:266, 267; *Briefwechsel zwischen Karoline von Humboldt, Rahel, und Varnhagen*, edited by Albert Leitzmann (Weimar, 1896), 62.

⁴⁴ *Tagebücher*, 1:25.

THE INTRIGUER
1802-1805

7. Cobenzl

IN ALL HIS voluminous writings of a personal nature Friedrich Gentz has left no positive record that he ever participated in formal religious observance. Yet more than once he hit a sort of personal sawdust trail, and his resolutions after such experiences are expressed in solemn, even pious, terms. The removal to Vienna had been accompanied by a characteristic resolve to lead a different and better life. This new life, Gentz fondly believed, would be strengthened by an all-absorbing purpose: to work for the welfare of Europe as a whole. And since Austrian interests were to a large extent European interests, Vienna was manifestly the best place possible from which to operate.¹

Thus, with a lightning thrust of Gentzian logic, a platonic embrace of Austria became at once not merely desirable but, by the nature of the case, almost inevitable. To most observers the union bore from the first all the earmarks of a *mésalliance*. The Austrian government was notoriously decorous, cautious, and hesitant; Gentz was a Francophobe firebrand of European repute. How had it happened, people wondered, that the Habsburg government, with its "respect for appearances," had hired him at all? The Prussian foreign office particularly would have been surprised to learn that Cobenzl had originally intended to use Gentz as a potential weapon not so much against France as against Prussia herself.²

In the negotiations preliminary to the reapportionment of German territory Prussia had managed to look out nicely for her own interests, and by the time the Austrian diplomats had been allowed to look in at the trough, only a few sorry morsels were left. Consequently, when Gentz first appeared in Vienna, in August of 1802, Cobenzl was especially concerned over "the dangers of Prussian aggrandizement," and in Gentz he thought he had found the man best fitted to awaken Ger-

¹ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:100, 372-373; Fournier, *Studien und Skizzen*, 2:121.

² Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 228.

many to these dangers. Unfortunately for Cobenzl, he had mistaken his man. Gentz was not anti-Prussian; he was pan-German. His mission was to foster Austro-Prussian harmony, and Cobenzl wanted him to contribute to Austro-Prussian discord.³

During Gentz's absence in Britain, however, Cobenzl and the French had finally come to an agreement on Germany, and in the early part of 1803, as the new arrangements were whipped into definite form, Austria assumed "a more accommodating spirit" toward Napoleon, and consequently toward Prussia. When Gentz returned to Vienna, therefore, in February of 1803, Cobenzl was no longer interested in a subtle press campaign against Prussia. As Gentz soon discovered, Cobenzl had no suggestions for him whatsoever, except that he wait patiently for something to turn up. During the next two eventful years this was the extent of Cobenzl's instructions. A fine predicament for Gentz, a man with an all-absorbing purpose! ⁴

To vegetate was not Gentz's natural mode of life. Everything in his makeup conspired to drive him into action. Deprived of a sphere of official activity, he proceeded to find for himself a sphere of unofficial activity. In short, although subsidized by the government, he intrigued quite on his own.

In 1803 Gentz was just turning thirty-nine. He knew the world. Politically it was run by counts, princes, and archdukes, and he was determined to make their world, his world. Professors, writers, members of the lesser bureaucracy, though estimable and frequently intelligent, were fatally bourgeois. When Gentz left Berlin he broke with the middle class. The break was not formally executed, it was never absolute; but it took place nonetheless. In the diary entries of his later years the Müllers and Rankes seem out of place among the innumerable members of the old aristocracy — the Esterhazys, Schönburgs, Lobkowitzes — and among the significant members of a new aristocracy — the Rothschilds, Parishes, and Eskeleses. In 1803 the day of these newcomers had not quite dawned; so Gentz used them . . . and dropped them, at least for the time. The salons of the great families were his constant resort. Through February, March, and April he made the rounds nightly with almost painful zeal, and he was soon on terms of intimacy with the blue-bloods who were to be his companions for the rest of his life.

The Austrian aristocracy was notorious for its pride of birth, but so

³ Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 191-198.

⁴ Deutsch, *Napoleonic Imperialism*, 216; *Tagebücher*, 1:25-26.

impregnable was its social position that it did not have to be ostentatiously snobbish. Other personable, interesting, and unpedigreed young men besides Gentz have borne witness to the essentially hospitable atmosphere in fashionable Vienna of that day. Yet for an interloper to have become so much a part of the *crème de la crème* was rare indeed. Gentz acquired a social position that was in a sense unique; he carved out for himself a niche where he could operate as a "brilliant agitator" in the very group that monopolized the decisive positions in the state.⁵

This social success so gratified Gentz's vanity that he had frequently to remind himself that a concert at Prince Lichnowsky's, with Beethoven at the piano and Prince Lobkowitz singing, was not an end in itself but a means to an end. He had to remind himself that these charming people were not there merely to be enjoyed, but to be used, influenced, propelled into desired courses of action. "I neither can nor want to renounce society," Gentz averred, "but it must be relegated to second place where it always belongs." Steadfastly, he remembered his mission.⁶

Experience was to teach Gentz that Austrian high society, from the point of view of his own particular projects, certainly belonged in second place. Starhemberg at London, Stadion at Berlin, Metternich at Dresden might be definitely anti-French and anti-Cobenzl, but they were not representative, Gentz discovered, of the Viennese *noblesse*, which taken as a whole was uninterested in political crusades or in politics generally, except in an exasperatingly dilletantist way. Nothing so irritates the zealot as a group that refuses to take the Cause seriously; and Gentz, though he continued his nightly tour of the fashionable establishments, was thoroughly disillusioned and disgusted. "The whole thing is a sorry mess of tasteless sensuality and genteel *misère*," he wrote Brinckmann. "The emptiness and tediousness of the great houses is boundless."⁷

Among Vienna's foreign contingent, however, official and otherwise, Gentz quickly found cronies who compensated temporarily for the dullness of the natives. Of these the chief was Baron Armfeldt, the Swed-

⁵ Augusta Weldler-Steinberg, ed., *Rahel Varnhagen: Ein Frauenleben in Briefen* (Potsdam, 1925), 145; *Tagebücher des Carl Friedrich Freiherrn Kübeck von Kübau*, edited by Max Freiherr von Kübeck (2 vols. in 3, and supplementary volume, Vienna, 1909), 1:226-227; Guglia, *Friedrich von Gentz*, 141; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:105-125; Eduard Wertheimer, *Geschichte Österreichs und Ungarns im ersten Jahrzehnt des 19. Jahrhunderts* (2 vols., Leipzig, 1884-90), 1:94-95; Eduard Wertheimer, "Ungedruckte Briefe Friedrich von Gentz," in the *Neue Freie Presse* (Vienna), August 31, 1887.

⁶ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:108, 136; vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 8.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 2:127.

ish ambassador, a bluff and dauntless fellow with a long record of intrigue and adventure behind him. The friendship of Armfeldt and Gentz was enhanced by their common adulation of a certain Count Nikita Panin. Indiscretion and excessive Francophobia had recently cost Panin his job as Russian vice-chancellor. He had come to Vienna and remained there until the last days of April, 1803. "We have plenty of Liechtensteins and Lobkowitzes and Schwarzenbergs and Esterhazys and Auerspergs here — and Colloredos and Cobenzls too, confound it! But one Panin makes up for a world of such beasts," Gentz confided to Brinckmann. This praise was sincerely meant; for some time to come Panin remained one of the fixed stars in Gentz's political firmament. After the departure of Panin, Gentz and Armfeldt shifted their social headquarters to the home of Count Rasumovsky, the Russian ambassador, a very rich man "of great character and real worth, solid as a rock; an unyielding, unpliant aristocrat in the true sense amidst the ruins of the world." Another habitu  of the Rasumovsky household, and intimate with Gentz at this time, was the famous Napoleon-hater from Corsica, Pozzo di Borgo, who was just beginning his long and distinguished career in the Russian diplomatic service. When Gentz later condensed his diaries for this period, he wrote: "Armfeldt, Pozzo, and I were, after a fashion, political triplets."⁸ This Russian coterie became one of the nuclei for an intrigue of wide-flung ramifications in which Gentz was a major participant.

For the time, however, Gentz's real activity was directed toward another quarter, London. The English ambassador in Vienna, the "haughty, capricious, and habitually inconsiderate" Arthur Paget, Gentz at first found difficult to handle. Then suddenly they were on terms of great intimacy and conferring with each other daily. The outbreak of war between England and France in May brought them still closer together, and soon a flood of letters and memoirs from Gentz's pen was flowing to England. When Count Montjoye, who was in the employ of the Duke of Brunswick, left for England in April he carried seventeen letters from Gentz to various people. Gentz himself emphasized the particular zeal with which he reported to Vansittart, secretary to the treasury. In the course of the summer he also established a regular cor-

⁸ *Ibid.*, 105, 108, 115, 126-127, 140; L on e Pingaud, *Un Agent secret sous la R volution et l'Empire: le comte d'Antraigues* (Paris, 1893), 239-240; *Tageb cher*, 1:28. A. Maggiolo prints a few routine excerpts of letters from Gentz in his *Pozzo di Borgo, 1764-1842* (Paris, 1890). Apparently several unpublished Gentz letters are in the family archives of the Pozzo di Borgo heirs. A. Wassiltchikow, in his *Les Razoumowski*, vol. 2, pt. 4, pp. 85-86 (Halle, 1893), reproduces a letter from Gentz to the Russian ambassador which apparently derives from the period of their earliest association.

respondence with Francis James Jackson, Lord Carysfort's successor in Berlin.⁹

It will be remembered that Gentz, although personally on good terms with the Addington ministry during his English visit, had made no secret of his vast preference for Pitt, Windham, and the Grenvilles. Now that war had begun, he felt, as did Paget, Jackson, and most of the English representatives at foreign capitals, that a change in the cabinet was essential if the struggle against Napoleon was to be brought to a successful conclusion. Consequently his letters to England, as he told Brinckmann, brimmed with invectives against the British ministry.¹⁰ Pitt's withdrawal of his tacit support of the Addington cabinet brought Gentz some encouragement: the strength of the opposition, with Pitt lined up with the Grenvilles and Foxites, indicated that the government in spite of itself, might now be prodded into a vigorous prosecution of the struggle.¹¹ Gentz seized the occasion to do some prodding of his

⁹ Deutsch, *Napoleonic Imperialism*, 213; *Tagebücher*, 1:27; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:126, 130; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:10; Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 14-23.

The memoir about which information is most abundant is *Sur les comptes rendus par le gouvernement français de l'état de ses finances*. A copy was taken to England by Count Montjoye who was "employed" to have it printed, by whom is not clear but perhaps by D'Ivernois. Thirty copies were made; two were sent to Gentz, who presented one copy to Brinckmann with the request that Jackson be allowed to see it. Charles Stuart, secretary of the British embassy at Vienna, also saw it. *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:130, 159, 162; vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 16-17; *Fortescue Manuscripts*, 7:186-187; Karmin, "Lettres de Gentz à D'Ivernois," in the *Revue historique de la Révolution française et de l'Empire*, 4:37; Gentz to Stuart, September 1, 1803, in the De Coppet collection, New York. I have not seen this pamphlet and know of no Gentz student who has.

In the spring of 1803 Gentz composed two large memoirs on the *Wahrscheinlichkeit eines Kontinentalkrieges, im Falle eines Krieges zwischen England und Frankreich*. These were written in German, and it is possible that one of them at least was laid before Cobenzl and before Archduke Carl. See Klinkowström, *Aus der alten Registratur*, 6-7; Jacubenz, "Gentz und Fasbender," in *Mitteilungen des kaiserlichen und königlichen Kriegsarchivs*, 7:77-78. On July 14 Gentz wrote Jackson in Berlin that he desired to send through him to England a memoir "on some matters of the greatest importance," but this memoir went instead in the packet of Arthur Paget, who departed unexpectedly for London shortly thereafter. The memoir came to the attention of Vansittart and possibly of Addington. Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 20, 22, 26; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:173-174.

Later on, in September, Gentz wrote a memoir for the English ministry. Four people only saw this piece in Vienna, among them Armfeldt, who was so impressed that he had a copy made and sent to the king of Sweden. It bore the title *Sur l'objet de la guerre actuelle et sur le système de conduite qu'elle exige de la part de l'Angleterre*. The original is missing, but its contents were briefly summarized by Gentz in a letter to Brinckmann. *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:159-162. Reiff, in his *Gentz*, 104, argues merely from silence when he says that this memoir though "meant for London . . . did not actually go there."

Finally, Gentz translated Burke's letter to W. E. Elliott in a German prose that he modestly considered would stand up well beside the best Fichte and Schleiermacher had to offer. *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:160-161. A good deal of pertinent Gentziana for this period undoubtedly lies in the archives of the Paget family, including possibly several memoirs hitherto inaccessible to students. The Wittichens intended to include the Paget material in their volume of Gentz's English correspondence, which unfortunately was never published.

¹⁰ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:131.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 161.

own and he was gratified to hear from Vansittart, one of Addington's supporters, that it was only by a "vigorous system of offensive operations conducted on the principles you have laid down with so much force and eloquence that we can expect a result honorable to this country and truly advantageous to Europe in general."¹² Unfortunately it is not known exactly what principles he had laid down in the memoir that Arthur Paget carried with him to London in the late summer of 1803, and to which this was the answer. But not long afterward, in another memoir to the English ministers,¹³ Gentz declared that if the war was to be successfully prosecuted, the directors of British policy must choose between two courses: either they must help to bring about an upheaval in the cabinets of the leading powers, thus paving the way for a new anti-French coalition, or they must set into motion expeditions capable of conquering the possessions of European nations in other parts of the world, and particularly in South America. It is obvious that the first course—to work for new leadership everywhere—struck him as the one most likely to bring about the end of French hegemony on the Continent.¹⁴

A cabinet revolution all around—that was Gentz's dominant idea in 1803; and before long the British government was to give it friendly and encouraging support. This was intrigue in the grand style, and Gentz was in the midst of it. With nothing definite to do in Vienna, he had quickly made himself a busybody operating on a Continental scale. Nevertheless he did not succumb completely to the illusion that his was the master mind of Europe; now and again, in confidence, he insisted that he did not attach undue weight to what he was accomplishing. But his belief in his mission was so great that he professed himself content if he could "become *one* of the instruments, even though the weakest, through which the world would be freed of this monster Bonaparte."¹⁵

In the meantime, during 1803, the Austrian emperor and his ministers remained strictly neutral. The ministers did not believe that Bonaparte as yet represented an immediate danger to the country. On September 1 when Prince Dolgoruky, whom the czar had recently sent to Vienna on a special mission, blurted out: "Are we never to unite our forces and fall upon these damned French and put an end to their rob-

¹² *Ibid.*, 173; Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 26.

¹³ See note 9.

¹⁴ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:162.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 144.

beries?" Cobenzl quietly answered that Austria "had need of peace" and that close harmony between Russia and Austria could check Bonaparte without war.¹⁶

With a man like Napoleon, however, one was never quite sure that peace could be maintained. Cobenzl therefore allowed Gentz to fulminate, holding him in reserve for use if and when the occasion should arise. He had more troublesome opponents than Gentz and could afford to look tolerantly at the machinations of such small fry.¹⁷

The serious opposition Cobenzl faced was that of Archduke Carl and his party. The archduke's victory, as signalized by the establishment of the *Staatskonferenz* in 1801,¹⁸ remained incomplete, and a bitter struggle for power between Carl's faction and the Colloredo-Cobenzl crowd still raged beneath the surface. When Gentz first realized that nothing could be accomplished through Cobenzl, he turned his attention hopefully to Carl. But he quickly discovered such a gulf "between the political views of the archduke and mine," as he frankly told Carl's confidant, Fasbender, that he abandoned hope of finding support in that quarter, although he did submit one memoir to Carl. Henceforth, for years, Gentz never tired of lambasting the archduke, and he never gave him a word of unqualified praise: "The world-famous Carl," he informed Brinckmann, "is in one word a miserable pike in a fishpond."¹⁹

In the long run his continuous excoriation of the archduke reflected more unfavorably upon Gentz than upon Carl. Carl, who had an intimate grasp of Austria's needs, maintained that a period of rehabilitation and reform was necessary before Austria dared engage in a venturesome foreign policy. Carl's reasoned caution, no less than Cobenzl's opportunism, led to an espousal of peace as being, temporarily at least, most consistent with Austria's interest. The two men differed on the means of ensuring peace, however. The archduke felt that peace should be based on friendship with France and Prussia; Cobenzl advocated a defensive agreement with Russia. More basic than these and other differences of opinion on policy were the differences between the personalities and temperaments of the men who wanted power, men who were struggling for political survival. In the heat of the struggle each faction, though convinced of the undesirability of war in the immediate future, pre-

¹⁶ Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 77-83; Deutsch, *Napoleonic Imperialism*, 216.

¹⁷ Klinkowström, *Aus der alten Registratur*, 7; Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 239, 240.

¹⁸ See above, chapter 6.

¹⁹ Jacubenz, "Gentz und Fasbender," in *Mitteilungen des kaiserlichen und königlichen Kriegsarchivs*, 7:77-78; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:209.

tended that it was not afraid to fight. This did not help the cause of peace.²⁰

Cobenzl made his fatal mistake when he failed to grasp the highly important fact that with Napoleon one was either actively friendly or actively unfriendly. He concluded that a defensive alliance with Russia would ensure peace; but he should have asked whether such an alliance could win a war. Gentz, on the other hand, when he consulted his reason, knew that the pertinent question was what alliance *could* win the war. His rational answer was that only a coalition between Austria, Prussia, Russia, and England could prevail. The trouble with Gentz the intriguer was that he did not consult his reason often enough. To paraphrase the words of Cobenzl, Gentz was so anxious to dance that he couldn't wait for the music.²¹ One fine day, however, in spite of the wisdom of his own quip, Cobenzl became aware, with something of a start, that he himself was dancing before the band was half assembled. His opportunism had got the better of him. To gain a lead on Carl, Cobenzl began to use the war party, but before he was through he had become the woefully inadequate agent of that party.

At the very end of 1803 Cobenzl quietly made an ominous move: he took a step to ensure peace which, typically, turned out to be a vague step toward war. Gentz would have approved the step in large measure had he known all that was going on; but in 1804 Cobenzl wished to keep Gentz in the dark, and he succeeded.

At the great imperial library in Vienna was an official, Johannes von Müller, who enjoyed considerable repute in the world of letters because of his history of Switzerland and other scholarly works. Müller, a Swiss by birth, was possessed of a consuming ambition that all too often drove him to weasel his way ahead. Had there been a psychiatrist in Vienna at that time to take him in hand, he might have fared better, for he was beset by a multitude of unfortunate psychological and physiological quirks. Widely and justly reputed to prefer love in the Greek style, he quite naturally turned from men's knowing glances to the solitude and solace of his books. Only the preceding year an unprincipled scoundrel had taken advantage of Müller's weakness to lead him into a course of action which ended in scandalous court proceedings.²²

²⁰ Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 87-88, 109-110, 121-122. See also Willy Andreas, "Johannes von Müller in Weimar," in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, 145 (1931):87, 88; Criste, *Erzherzog Carl*, 2:252-260.

²¹ Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, 6:333.

²² Tschirch, *Geschichte der öffentlichen Meinung*, 1:83-91; Andreas, "Johannes von Müller," in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, 145:70-71; Pingaud, *Comte d'Antraigues*, 237. The almost incredible story of the Müller scandal is told in detail by Karl Henking in his *Johannes von Müller* (2 vols., Stuttgart and Berlin, 1909-28), 2:546-582.

Gentz was fully aware of Müller's unfortunate reputation, but he had read and admired his works, and had corresponded with him. Müller was therefore one of the first acquaintances Gentz made when he settled in Vienna. During 1803 the two saw each other now and again, and at the end of the year Gentz wrote that they stood on good terms and that their political ideas were almost identical, though they seldom exchanged views. Most people associated Müller with the Gentzian party in Vienna, but he did not altogether belong there. His real aim was to be agreeable to everybody. When Cobenzl chose to make Müller his special emissary, he knew his man. For personal reasons Müller was anxious to leave Vienna, and he was not burdened with principles.²³

Müller's mission had a twofold purpose. First, through the notorious Count d'Antraigues, Russian councilor of legation at Dresden, he was to provide an opportunity for Cobenzl to communicate secretly with Czartoryski, whose influence in the Russian foreign office was rapidly increasing. The support of D'Antraigues was to be secured for three purposes — the recall of Rasumovsky, a defensive alliance between Austria and Russia, and the avoidance of immediate war. Since D'Antraigues enjoyed the confidence of Czartoryski, it was felt that his advice would carry considerable weight. Müller saw D'Antraigues at Dresden early in 1804; in the name of the Austrian government he offered him a thousand ducats a year and found him ready to fall in line with Cobenzl's projects.

The second purpose of Müller's mission was to sound out the German princes and the court at Berlin on the possibility of either a new *Fürstenbund* which should include Austria, or a defensive alliance between Austria and Prussia. With this end in view, Müller went to Weimar and thence to Berlin. The Duke of Weimar was sympathetic toward these ideas,²⁴ but in Berlin they met with a cool reception. Müller

²³ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:269; 2:111, 182; *Tagebücher*, 1:27; Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 124.

²⁴ Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Gentz*, 1:174; Reiff, *Gentz*, 103; and Wittmer, "Ligne, Müller, Gentz, et l'Autriche," in *Annales Prince de Ligne*, 5:316, all assert that Müller carried a memoir from Gentz to Karl August of Weimar. I find no direct evidence of any such memoir; and the communication that Karl August made to Frederick William III of Prussia on the basis of his conversations with Johannes Müller contains false information about the factional situation at Vienna which could not possibly have come from Gentz. Even Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 122 and note, cannot be relied upon here. He misquotes Häusser, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 2:413, 414, and speaks of the memoir which, according to Häusser, "Johannes Müller gave to Duke Karl August at the beginning of 1804." Häusser, however, says no such thing, and even Fournier's page reference to Häusser is wrong. Häusser actually speaks of, and quotes from, "the communication which the duke made to Berlin." This may now be read *in extenso* in Andreas, "Johannes von Müller," in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, 145:87, 88. Henking, *Johannes von Müller*, 2:601-602, is singularly unenlightening on Müller's sojourn in Weimar.

personally was acceptable enough and received an appointment as historiographer of the House of Brandenburg.

Müller soon established a regular correspondence with Gentz, who was ignorant of the wily historian's double-dealing, and through these reports was able to communicate to both Cobenzl and Czartoryski the views of the Gentz faction. This channel of information supplemented nicely the reports of the police and other officials, based on letters that came into their hands and on loose gossip making the rounds. Cobenzl and Czartoryski were thus well informed of the intriguers' activities and set their course accordingly.²⁵

The Rasumovsky clique of Gentz, Armfeldt, and Pozzo di Borgo, meanwhile, aware that they had been fishing in dangerous waters, hastened to redouble their activities against Cobenzl. Vigorous aid came from Arthur Paget, who returned early in 1804 to his post in Vienna after several months' leave. Paget soon asked the British foreign secretary "whether an attempt should not be made to prevail upon the Russian Government to instruct their Ambassador at this court to demand, in connection with me, the dismissal of Count Cobenzl."²⁶

Paget's officious dispatch arrived in London while the cabinet was in the midst of a shake-up that brought Pitt back as prime minister and replaced Lord Hawkesbury with Lord Harrowby in the foreign office. In July Harrowby finally answered Paget's suggestion. Paget was told to let St. Petersburg take the lead in moving against Cobenzl. But the initiative did not come from St. Petersburg. Cobenzl's secret connection with Czartoryski, through D'Antraigues, was insurance against that. Gentz was left to howl that Alexander was "a weakling" and Czartoryski was possessed of "limited brains and an unsteady character."²⁷

It must be admitted that Cobenzl, for all his drawbacks, was not a petty man. Of all his opponents Gentz was the most vulnerable, because of his complete dependence upon Cobenzl's support for his nominal connection with the Austrian government. Yet Cobenzl, though urged by the emperor through Colloredo to do something about Gentz, declined to take any action. At the very height of Paget's intrigue against Cobenzl — an intrigue that Gentz certainly supported and probably prompted — Cobenzl generously wrote to Colloredo: "To discharge

²⁵ Wittmer, "Ligne, Müller, Gentz, et l'Autriche," in *Annales Prince de Ligne*, 5:257; 6:129-130, 236-237; Andreas, "Johannes von Müller," in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, 145:72; Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 100.

²⁶ Sir Augustus B. Paget, ed., *The Paget Papers* (2 vols., London, 1896), 2:122, 126, 130-131.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 150; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:196-197.

Gentz actually from the service of His Majesty would induce him to do us much more harm than he is doing at present. The harm that he does us now is not sufficiently great, but that we can still tolerate him." Hormayr, one judges, was right when he characterized Cobenzl as "kind-hearted, charitable, liberal, generous; hot-tempered, but forgiving; reckless, and yet as cunning as discreet."²⁸

More than kind-hearted charity actually lay behind Cobenzl's defense of Gentz. Cobenzl had been chiefly responsible for employing the intriguing publicist, and *amour-propre* dictated that he defend him if he possibly could. Perhaps Cobenzl did not yet realize the full extent of Gentz's implication in the Paget-Rasumovsky moves for an overturn in the Austrian cabinet. In any case that was an intrigue which he did not much fear: he openly told Rasumovsky that Paget was deceived if he expected to bring about his overthrow, since the emperor would certainly support him.²⁹

Cobenzl's next move suggests that he tolerated Gentz for an additional reason. Certain events in the first half of 1804 led the vice-chancellor to believe, for all his caution, that a rapprochement with the war party might be desirable in the not distant future. The execution of the Duc d'Enghien on March 21, Bonaparte's assumption of the imperial title shortly after, and uncertainty about the future of Austria's position in Venetia made him wonder whether war could be forestalled indefinitely. Cobenzl's chief antagonist had been the Archduke Carl all along, and the clash between their viewpoints and personalities had intensified with the months. To strike a telling blow against Carl, Cobenzl decided to use two men who had been closely associated with Gentz and whose views were rightly considered to accord with those of the war party. These two men were Fasbender and General Mack.

Fasbender, a former university professor at Trier, had entered Austrian service, and through the favor of Carl had risen to a position in the War Department where he enjoyed an importance exceeded only by that of the archduke and equaled only by that of the quartermaster general, Duka. For a time the three had worked together harmoniously, but in July, 1804, Cobenzl became aware of strife between Duka and Fasbender and decided that the moment was opportune to deal the archduke a body blow. He urged on Colloredo the desirability of working through Fasbender, although he knew that Fasbender was a tool whom Colloredo would use only with gloves.³⁰

²⁸ Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 240; Vehse, *Memoirs*, 2:350.

²⁹ Paget, *Paget Papers*, 2:126.

³⁰ Criste, *Erzherzog Carl*, 2:276; Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 241-242.

Fasbender, it is true, had for several months been pursuing a devious course. His simultaneous intimacy with Gentz and Carl proves that he was a master at going two ways at once. In the past winter he had engaged in a secret and aggressive negotiation to enlarge the Austrian domain at the expense of Bavaria—a negotiation that had embroiled Cobenzl with Napoleon, and probably gave rise to the widespread illusion among the half-informed that the archduke's faction consisted entirely of war hawks. Nevertheless Cobenzl proposed in July, 1804, that Fasbender be forgiven his past sins if he would persuade the archduke to dispense with Duka and take Mack as quartermaster general.³¹

A pupil of the great Lacy, Mack had achieved far more proficiency in self-advertisement than in military science. Gentz had met Mack in March, 1803, and duly impressed he wrote to Fasbender: "How is it possible that the sheer merit of this man does not strike to earth everything which stands in the way of his activity?" But even with Cobenzl's backing, the star of the future hero of Ulm remained for the time being in eclipse. From some quarter arose effective opposition to the proposed changes in the War Department; and incidentally the failure of the scheme was a greater blow to Fasbender than to Mack, because the next time Mack's supporters attacked the War Department Fasbender fell as the first casualty.³²

Events in London and Berlin during the summer of 1804 gave some encouragement to men who, like Gentz, hoped above all else for cabinet revolutions everywhere. The fall of Addington and Pitt's return to office have been mentioned. In Berlin a comparable but by no means identical change had taken place. The defender of Prussia's neutrality system, Count Haugwitz, resigned; but his successor, Hardenberg, was no Pitt, and Gentz felt far less enthusiasm about the situation in Prussia than about that in England. Still he could and did derive some encouragement from the fact that it was possible to drive lethargic leaders out of office.³³ Consequently, undeterred by earlier reverses, Gentz shifted his line of attack and once more took up the cudgels against Cobenzl.

Among the younger brothers of the emperor was the Archduke John, who, because of Carl's attachment to him, occupied the important office of chief of engineers, although he was still in his early twenties.

³¹ Deutsch, *Napoleonic Imperialism*, 218, 224–225; Andreas, "Johannes von Müller," in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, 145:87–88; Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 241–242.

³² Jacubenz, "Gentz und Fasbender," in *Mitteilungen des kaiserlichen und königlichen Kriegsarchivs*, 7:76. See also *Tagebücher*, 1:26; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:111.

³³ *Ibid.*, 220; Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 36.

A great lover of the beauties of nature, John liked nothing better than to tramp over the mountains of Tyrol clad in the costume of the natives; the people of Tyrol looked upon him as one of their own and loved him. He was also interested in letters, and honored the historians Johannes von Müller and Hormayr with his friendship. His receptivity to new ideas is indicated by the fact that as an old man he was chosen "Imperial Vicar" by the Frankfurt Assembly of 1848.

Among the new ideas that appealed to the youthful archduke was that of nationalism. Johannes von Müller, who upon occasion could effectively simulate conviction, had played upon John's nationalistic sentiments, and Gentz decided that the impressionable young man might be the means of exerting a healthy Gentzian influence in the councils of state. In the late summer of 1804 Gentz consequently presented to Archduke John a carefully considered memoir on the policy that Austria should pursue, and urged him to carry its line of argument direct to the emperor.

August Fournier considered this memoir one of "the finest works of the gifted politician." It had, it is true, eloquent passages in which the superlative qualities of the German people as individuals were contrasted with their appalling political ineptitude as a nation, and the student of German nationalism will not want to miss these stirring words, whose dynamic force Gentz only half understood, whose exaggerated connotations he later rejected.³⁴ But taken as a whole the memoir did not measure up to the statesmanlike appraisal of affairs which Gentz presented in his *Von dem politischen Zustande von Europa*.

Since 1801 Gentz's hatred of Napoleon had not lessened: "If Beelzebub should rise out of hell, I would lick his feet if he would just promise to pursue this earthly devil," he declared in a typical outburst.³⁵ Constant preoccupation with his hatred, his mission, had broken down somewhat his rational resistance to reckless action; and opportunity to appraise at first hand the caliber of leadership in Berlin and Vienna had resulted in a realization of the practical difficulties of an Austro-Prussian alliance, although he continued to regard it as "the most desirable of all alliances." Consequently, since he was convinced of the inevitability of war and could see scant hope of persuading Prussia to change her ways, he probed the second-best possibility—that of an alliance with Russia and England. Here it became apparent that too much emotion had entered into his calculations; for he concluded that a coalition between

³⁴ Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 131. The memoir itself is printed in the same volume, pp. 242–292.

³⁵ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:196–197.

Austria, England, and Russia could defeat Napoleon, and once more he castigated the Austrian ministers, who had either laid aside the various and urgent Russian proposals without so much as a reply "or had replied to them with empty and equivocal remarks."³⁶

Actually the much maligned Cobenzl was at the time in the last stages of a negotiation with Russia which provided for joint military action against France in case Turkey should be attacked, more of Germany occupied, or the neutrality of Naples violated by Napoleon. Austria accepted the alliance in fact on October 3, and a month later the secret convention was signed. In August Paget knew what was on foot,³⁷ and by November even Napoleon was aware of it. But Gentz, who lived on terms of such intimacy with Paget and Rasumovsky, had no notion that the negotiations had gone so far.³⁸

Gentz was not alone in his ignorance, for even Archduke Carl remained in the dark until December. Cobenzl, meanwhile, realizing that Austrian policy was no longer at sixes and sevens with the Gentzian views, hinted diplomatically early in November that the fiery publicist would soon find the Viennese atmosphere much more congenial. But Gentz shortsightedly and inexcusably refused to have anything to do with Cobenzls who came bearing olive branches; several months of opposition had left him with too many small prejudices against the vice-chancellor. He dismissed Cobenzl's friendly advances as two-faced "flowers of speech," and informed Brinckmann scornfully: "These fellows are finally beginning to notice that the old course gets them nowhere. They are beginning to find out that those whom they considered *têtes exaltées, cerveaux brûlés, fanatiques*, etc., are right after all. They are learning that they must consider a retreat. They are fond of their jobs, and they are trying now to go over gradually to the new policy to which the force of circumstances will soon compel them."³⁹

Actually, in the autumn of 1804, the differences between Gentz and

³⁶ Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 261.

³⁷ Nevertheless, the English government was still deeply distrustful of Cobenzl. Since Czartoryski had failed to take the initiative in trying to influence the Austrian emperor to oust Cobenzl, the English, in October, sounded Czartoryski out on the matter. Czartoryski replied that "the more favourable disposition lately evinced by the cabinet of Vienna induced him to think that before we entered into any plan to effect a change of ministry, that it would be advisable to await at least the issue of the present negotiations." John Holland Rose, ed., *Select Despatches from the British Foreign Archives Relating to the Formation of the Third Coalition against France, 1804-1805* (London, 1904), 70.

³⁸ Deutsch, *Napoleonic Imperialism*, 271-272, 304; Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 140-147, 231; Paget, *Paget Papers*, 2:144; Heinrich Ritter von Srbik, *Das Oesterreichische Kaisertum und das Ende des Heiligen Roemischen Reiches, 1804-1806* (Berlin, 1927), 32, 33.

³⁹ Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 151; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:244-245.

Cobenzl on policy were very slight indeed, and Gentz's attitude toward the ministers in charge reflected little credit upon him. On December 18, 1804, in another letter to Brinckmann he insisted that he had always fought with all his might for principles, but that he had been uniformly "mild, forbearing, and friendly toward individuals, even toward those whom I regard as chiefly responsible for the common deterioration."⁴⁰ The facts do not substantiate this self-righteous statement; if Gentz had been really honest with himself he would have seen that his insistence upon all-round cabinet revolutions as the *sine qua non* of a sound European policy against Napoleon led inevitably to a confusing of personalities with principles. By December, 1804, he had fought so long against Cobenzl that he refused to see anything good in him, however Gentzian his principles might have become.

It so happened that the principles of Cobenzl were put to trial in 1805 and that they led to another Austrian disaster. By inference, since the principles of Gentz as set forth in the memoir to John were strikingly similar to those of Cobenzl, that memoir and Gentz must share the strictures that history has laid upon Cobenzl. The fatal error which Gentz shared unwittingly with Cobenzl was in thinking that Prussian adherence to a Russian-English-Austrian coalition was desirable, but not absolutely indispensable. Gentz was willing to risk war, even if Prussia fought on Napoleon's side. He was willing to see Austria embarked upon a course fraught with the most compelling dangers. So anxious to dance was he that *he* did not want to wait for the music.⁴¹

One extenuating circumstance, however, puts Gentz's political attitude at this time in a better light. Pessimistic though he was regarding the practical possibility of cementing an Austro-Prussian alliance in the immediate future, he insisted that the idea must not be dropped until every conceivable attempt had been made to bring it to pass.⁴² The next few months were to find him expending every effort to bring Austria and Prussia in line with each other.

The memoir prepared particularly for the Archduke John Gentz passed around, as was his custom, to a number of other people as well.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 249.

⁴¹ Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 264. Paul Wittichen defended Gentz against the charge of planning "an immediate aggressive war against France" by pointing to the fact that Gentz believed "a successful coalition under the existing conditions impossible." Wittichen's argument, it seems to me, fails to take into account the unreality of Gentz's whole position. What were the conclusions worth that Gentz based on his analysis of "the existing conditions," when he was palpably ignorant of what "the existing conditions" were? "Die Dritte Coalition und F. v. Gentz," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 23 (1902):463-464.

⁴² Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 258.

The most fervently nationalistic portion he sent to Johannes Müller in Berlin; and Hardenberg, hearing of it, asked to see the piece. Two copies, one in German, the other in English, found their way to the foreign office at London.⁴³ In addition a revision in French, enlarged to include a detailed discussion of the leading personalities in Vienna, was dispatched to Pitt in October. Alarmed possibly by the continued favor with which the Pitt government regarded Carl, Gentz went after the hapless archduke anew. One talent he admitted Carl had: "He appears to me," said Gentz, "to resemble always those great musicians who seem to be superior beings at the moment when they touch their instrument, and who cease to exist for us, so to speak, as soon as they stop playing." At a critical moment in the course of a battle Carl was a genius, Gentz continued, but in all else he was a nonentity. Lacking administrative ability and knowledge of men, narrow in his conception of policy, Carl deserved to rank as one of Austria's major liabilities. Gentz concluded with an appeal to Pitt to propose a defensive alliance between England, Austria, Prussia, and Russia, so that any war which one of them made on Napoleon "would become the common cause of Germany." The Austrian ministers, he said innocently, would oppose such a policy, but the emperor would support it and find new ministers.⁴⁴

In 1803 Jeffrey and Brougham, of the critical *Edinburgh Review*, had marveled at the "skillful and penetrating eye" with which Gentz "had surveyed the proceedings of the belligerent powers, and with what scrupulous exactness he had informed himself as to their resources."⁴⁵ Since 1803 Gentz had done nothing to enhance this reputation. His misleading judgments of men and his political miscalculations had been too numerous to inspire confidence. People who depended to some extent upon his critical intelligence might well wonder whether Gentz were prophet or false prophet.

⁴³ Karl Griewank, "Hardenberg und die preussische Politik, 1804-1806," in *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte*, 47 (1935):250; Public Record Office (cited hereafter as P.R.O.), London, F.O., 7/76.

⁴⁴ Paget, *Paget Papers*, 2:149; Paul Wittichen, "Die Dritte Coalition und F. v. Gentz," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für oesterreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 23:473, 477-478. Similar judgments on Carl are to be found in *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:257-258; and in Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:59.

⁴⁵ *Edinburgh Review for April, 1803 . . . July, 1803*, 2:2, 3; Brougham, *Life and Times*, 1:184.

8. The War of 1805

FOR GENTZ the year 1804 was largely, but not entirely, a year of intrigue. Most of his energies were expended in agitation for the removal of political undesirables from their positions of influence in the various European capitals, particularly in Vienna. But in spite of his conviction that men like Cobenzl were hopelessly unregenerate, Gentz did not cease, upon occasion, to bring his views directly to their attention.¹

When on May 18 Bonaparte, with the sanction of the senate, began signing his name "Napoleon," thus signifying his assumption of the imperial title and the foundation of a new European dynasty, Gentz chose the occasion to urge Cobenzl to take a decided stand against the usurper. Early in June he presented a *Mémoire sur la nécessité de ne pas reconnaître le titre impérial de Bonaparte*. Not that he supposed for one minute that Cobenzl and such "filthy beggars" could "be drawn out of their slime!" But he could not repress a certain "delight in harassing and irritating such dogs with stern strong words of truth." Consequently off to Cobenzl the memoir went.²

In the development of Gentz's political opinions this memoir occupies a place of interest. The man who in 1790 believed in the sovereignty of the people, who in 1797 was a mild constitutionalist, now retreated to an arch-conservative position. He argued that sovereignty of the people was the root principle of the Revolution, and that Napoleon, for all his arbitrary rule, was bag and baggage of the Revolution. (Napoleon did in fact give lip service to the principle of popular sovereignty by authorizing a perfunctory plebiscite to vote approval of his new title.) Therefore, said Gentz, to recognize Napoleon's imperial title was to

¹ See Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 33, note, where mention is made of two of Gentz's memoirs sent by Paget to London in June. Gentz claimed that one had been presented to Francis and that the other had gone to the czar and had received the stamp of his approval.

² The memoir itself is printed in *Mémoires et lettres inédites du chevalier de Gentz*, edited by Gustav Schlesier (Stuttgart, 1841), 1-28; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:194-195.

"adopt and sanction the Revolution and all its doctrine." Once that recognition was granted, "there is no longer anything sacred or stable in human affairs; the thrones of sovereigns, the rights and the privileges of the upper classes, the most revered institutions, the most solid establishments no longer exist, except by the tolerance of their secret and numerous enemies." The entire argument bordered on the absurd, as Gentz by implication admitted when he took great pains a few years later to justify Napoleon's legitimate right to occupy the French throne. In 1804, however, his passionate opposition to Napoleon and Cobenzl drove him to line up momentarily on the lunatic fringe with the ultras.

Cobenzl did not drop everything to read the Gentzian words of wisdom, which he rightly suspected were designed "to please the chorus leaders of the war party." On his own initiative he held back recognition of the new imperial title as long as possible, which was what Gentz had advised. Not until August, after haggling over every conceivable detail, did the Vienna government recognize Napoleon's new title. Though disgusted over the reasons which actually lay behind it, Gentz was elated over the delay.³

Gentz, with an author's pride, circulated his memoir widely. It was seen by Metternich, Brinckmann, and Hardenberg in Berlin, by Henry Pierrepont, England's new envoy to Sweden, Czartoryski in St. Petersburg, Buol in Dresden, and Starhemberg and Harrowby in London. In a letter of fulsome praise, in which he expressed his enchantment at seeing "the supreme direction of the affairs of the British Empire" again entrusted to Pitt's hands, Gentz urged the prime minister to read the copy he had sent to Harrowby. There is no record of the reaction that this legitimist effusion aroused in the cool Englishman. In all likelihood Pitt was not favorably impressed, provided he read it at all; for the English government soon took steps to counteract the legitimist predictions of Russia and Sweden, her prospective allies, though without complete success.⁴ In Russia and Sweden, therefore, Gentz's memoir had its best chance of being favorably received and of influencing policy.

³ Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 128, note; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:208. Harold C. Deutsch in the most recent thoroughgoing appraisal of the incident says that "the negotiation . . . gives a picture of Austrian diplomacy at its worst." *Napoleonic Imperialism*, 234.

⁴ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 23, 28; C. S. B. Buckland, ed., "Letters from Gentz and Others in Vienna to the Hon. H. M. Pierrepont, 1803-1806," in the *English Historical Review*, 53 (1938):106; Gentz to Stuart, June 17, 1804, in the De Coppet collection, New York; Gentz to Pitt, June 17, 1804, P.R.O., London, F.O., G.D., 8/138. A copy of the memoir is also to be seen among the Hardenberg Papers, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 92, Hardenberg, E. 5. Here it bears the title *Mémoire politique remis au Cabinet de Vienne au mois de mai, 1804*.

Gentz had sent his memoir to Czartoryski at St. Petersburg with the request that it be shown to Czar Alexander.⁵ Perhaps the czar never saw the memoir; but about this time he began, in his incongruous way, to manifest a lively concern not only for the application of the national principle in a future European resettlement, but also for the restoration of "legal authority." The czar refused to recognize Napoleon's imperial title, and when he sent an emissary to London in the fall to make overtures for an alliance, the restoration of lawful rulers figured in the instructions as a prospective war aim. It has been suggested by a German specialist that the injection of the legitimist element may have come either from Czartoryski or from Alexander.⁶ Czartoryski certainly had seen Gentz's memoir; perhaps the czar also had seen it. Gentz's legitimist arguments, which had won few converts in Vienna, may therefore have made a real impression in St. Petersburg.

Whatever may have been the effect of Gentz's memoir on the Russian statesmen, it is certain that it was enthusiastically received in Sweden.⁷ The king, Gustavus IV, was, like Gentz, aflame with a mission: he was determined to see the French throne restored to the Bourbons; himself he envisioned as a spotless knight, defending unto the last the sacred principles of legitimacy. When the Duc d'Enghien's dog was left masterless upon the execution of his Bourbon owner, Gustavus IV overwhelmed the bereaved animal with public manifestations of royal favor. Such conduct upon the part of the immaculate Swedish knight-errant struck Gentz as sublime rather than ridiculous. "He has made his throne . . . the purest and most respectable to be seen anywhere," Gentz solemnly declared. The king, for his part, did not fail to see in the facile publicist a fellow member of the simon-pure elite; in a letter to Gentz he delightedly paid his tribute to "the purified principles which prevail in your writings." When Austria finally gave formal recognition to Napoleon's imperial dignity, Gustavus IV objected with vigor, declaring that such recognition lay within the sole jurisdiction of the Reichstag of the Holy Roman Empire, of which he was also a member. His attitude was honored by the French with an "infamous diatribe" in the *Moniteur*. Gentz flew to the king's defense with an article which was

⁵ Wassiltchikow, *Les Razoumowski*, vol. 2, pt. 4, pp. 85-86.

⁶ Schaefer, *Die Dritte Koalition*, 31. I have discussed in an earlier chapter certain aspects of Gentz's relation to the ideas that went into the formulation of war aims by the Third Coalition. In summary it may be said that Gentz approached, and perhaps influenced, the Russian point of view in his ideas on the right of intervention and legitimacy, but that he was in accord with the British in his lack of enthusiasm for a system of states based on a balance of power modified so as to recognize the national principle.

⁷ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:453-456.

published in Stralsund; and Cobenzl seized the occasion to give Armfeldt his passports for a return to the great north.

The ejected Armfeldt had made himself obnoxious by undiplomatic conduct, which finally reached the level of the following: at a dinner where Gentz and Armfeldt were seated directly across from Cobenzl, Armfeldt beckoned a waiter to his side and asked in a stage whisper: "Have you any oysters?" "No," was the reply. "Then bring me something else that I can spew out in the face of that *Jeanfoutre* over there," the gallant Swede ordered.⁸

The Austrian high authorities had for a long time frowned upon Gentz's close association with Armfeldt. Their displeasure was consequently intense when Gustavus IV chose the occasion of his envoy's dismissal from Vienna to reward Gentz with the Swedish Order of the North Star. The possession of orders meant a great deal to men in the early nineteenth century. To Gentz, a burgher by birth, it brought the right to be addressed henceforth as the Chevalier Friedrich von Gentz. Elated as he was by the honor, he was greatly disappointed when Cobenzl called him straightway upon the carpet and informed him that the emperor would not let him wear the decoration. Only as a concession did Cobenzl let him accept it provided he kept it in its box—a soft-hearted action which the vice-chancellor justified by the comforting reflection that Gentz would never have one of the Austrian orders. Gentz wrote that he did not accept this reproof with a shrug and a smile but that he replied haughtily: "I do not find myself bound to any place, or any sort of function; I am free to leave Vienna tomorrow. In general I can only regard myself as a political free-lance whose pen belongs much more to a cause than to any particular government." When Brinckmann warned that the ministers might punish him as they had Armfeldt, he replied with exaggerated self-importance that the emperor had formed an "opinion of me that nothing can shake, and even the weakest of the ministers would consider himself forever dishonored if he did not do his utmost to keep me. . . . The archdukes are not more secure in the saddle . . . than I."⁹

Actually the emperor had, and always was to have, a very poor opinion of Gentz. Gentz had too much intellectual ability, too little bureaucratic subserviency, too much of a private life to measure down to the thoroughly third-rate standards of Francis. Gentz no more knew this than

⁸ *Ibid.*, 230–231. See also Deutsch, *Napoleonic Imperialism*, 194, 195; Buckland, "Letters from Gentz and Others to Pierrepont," in the *English Historical Review*, 53:108–109; Srbik, *Oesterreichische Kaisertum*, 34–35; Schlesier, *Mémoires et lettres de Gentz*, 43–58.

⁹ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:243–244, 247–249; Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 138.

he realized how uncertain were the archdukes in the saddle; in consequence the full weight of his ire fell as usual on Cobenzl. Cobenzl, meanwhile, though frequently critical, was actually his most consistent supporter.

Gentz's defense of the legitimist claims of the Bourbons to the throne of France was not confined to memorializing the Austrian government or to actively supporting the king of Sweden's attitude on the question. In the preceding year, that is, in 1803, he had established direct relations with Louis XVIII, who was living at the time in Warsaw. Through the Marquis de Bonnay and the Bishop of Nancy, Gentz carried on a correspondence with the Bourbon claimant to the throne, and it is conceivable that he may have received some financial encouragement from that quarter. Of the entire correspondence the only extant document is a "project for a declaration . . . against the imperial title usurped by Bonaparte," which Gentz drew up for Louis XVIII. In sensible and statesmanlike language he urged Louis to associate himself strongly with legitimacy, but not with black reaction; to pledge himself to the conservation "of everything good that Providence has caused to spring up, even amidst the debris of the Revolution" and to a foreign policy conformable to peace based on balance of power.¹⁰ This was advice that the worldly wise Bourbon could appreciate, and these principles did in fact see realization when he gained the French throne a decade later.

On October 18, 1804, Gentz announced smugly to his confidant, Brinckmann: "I can assure you without boastfulness that I have not erred in a single political calculation during the past year."¹¹ Poor Gentz! If he had reversed the statement and confessed that not once had his political shafts hit the target, he would have been nearer the truth. Cobenzl, with his Russian defensive alliance in his pocket, had embarked upon a course of which Gentz was entirely ignorant, and his ignorance was to become increasingly profound as the first months of 1805 rolled by.

"Deeply convinced of the complete futility of all hopes based on Russia," and greatly pleased that he, for one, had not fallen for the foolish idea that "real help was to be reckoned on from that quarter," Gentz bent all his efforts in the winter of 1804-05 to save "the independence of Europe" through an Austro-Prussian alliance. His great hope centered in Archduke John, to whom he assigned the task of driving

¹⁰ *Tagebücher*, 1:333; Schlesier, *Mémoires et lettres de Gentz*, 39-40.

¹¹ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:231.

the emperor to persist in efforts to secure a Prussian alliance. And Gentz still hoped to replace Cobenzl with an able man, preferably Metternich.¹²

Actually, the Austrian government was quite willing to establish close relations with Prussia, but no encouragement came from Berlin. Metternich, who had been transferred from Dresden to the Hohenzollern court, was instructed in September, 1804, to work for an alliance in association with Johannes von Müller. The project looked very promising in the early autumn, especially when Prince Louis Ferdinand, Gentz's old crony, appeared in Vienna and enthusiastically supported the idea. But Louis Ferdinand was only a private individual without credit at home, and his activities in Vienna were repudiated by Frederick William III. In December, upon his return to Berlin, Louis Ferdinand, undaunted, once more took up the cudgels for the alliance project in a memoir that he submitted to Kleist, the Prussian king's adjutant general; but it made no impression. The Berlin government could not resist the will-o'-the-wisp of aggrandizement in Germany, which Napoleon had conjured up to tempt avid Prussian eyes, and the importunities of Louis Ferdinand were ignored.¹³

Gentz was unaware of these moves for a rapprochement between Austria and Prussia, although the principal agents, Metternich, Johannes von Müller, and Louis Ferdinand, were all particular friends of his. At the time of Louis Ferdinand's sojourn in Vienna, Gentz was vacationing in Tyrol, and about eight months passed before he took occasion to praise the activities of the prince in Vienna and to express regret at having missed him during his visit.¹⁴ Of the policy that Johannes von Müller was authorized to advocate in Berlin, Gentz was apparently equally ignorant. The first hint he had of it did not come directly and confidentially but through a book review in the *Jenaische Literaturzeitung* in which Müller launched into an attack on "the persistent antagonism between the two great German states."

When Gentz read the review he was carried off his feet with enthusiasm, and he swore, as he wrote the very next day — November 9 — "to establish an eternal union" with Müller. "Believe me, honored friend," he declared with consummate flattery, "I am blinded by no foolish vanity; I know and feel how high you stand above me, and acquaintances in Vienna will all bear me witness that whenever anyone here has com-

¹² Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:18; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:251, 259-260.

¹³ Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 144-146; Wahl, *Louis Ferdinand*, 168-169, 193-199; Deutsch, *Napoleonic Imperialism*, 305.

¹⁴ Paul Bailieu, "Prinz Louis Ferdinand: Eine historisch-biographische Studie," in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, 45 (1885):48-49; Wahl, *Louis Ferdinand*, 200-204.

plimented me for my slight services, either the text or the sense of my reply has been: 'You have among you one who is infinitely greater. Give him first what is his due.' But though I recognized your superiority, unalloyed and without qualification . . . I have pride enough to believe that I have much that can make a continuous connection with me interesting to you. My manner of thinking about the great affairs of the world and of mankind manifestly approximates your own as closely as is possible — taking into account my inferior talent and entirely different external development — and my mind is continually open to every new and free point of view, just as my feelings, praise God, have not grown numb to any of the nobler emotions. To this must be added that few Germans of the learned class touch at so many points as do I the unlearned world — the higher classes, the entire frivolous tumult of the so-called good society, and the foreign countries — which also are not to be scorned. If therefore I do not produce anything myself, I am yet undeniably one of those *through whom* much can be realized. Therefore you dare not, cannot, push me aside or neglect me; and even if you did, I should storm you so long with requests and proposals that you would finally give in to me. I insist on an animated and continuous correspondence; *you must* grant me this." The great theme of this proposed correspondence was to be a discussion of the means "how and where and by whom" the "suspension of all rivalry between Austria and Prussia" might be achieved. "I know very well," Gentz had to add, "that so long as the present Austrian ministry exists, such an alliance is no more to be thought of than any other great and decisive measure."¹⁵ The letter ended on a note of ringing nationalism, in which Gentz expressed his yearning to see all Germany united as one state.

Johannes von Müller must have had difficulty in restraining a self-satisfied smirk as he read this letter. In the first place it was clearly evident that Gentz, for all his pride in his associations with the great world, was appallingly ignorant of what was going on behind the scenes; the lonely Swiss historiographer in Berlin knew far more about the real plans and purposes of the directing statesmen in Vienna than did Gentz. Furthermore, it must have given Müller some satisfaction to know that the most adroit of flatterers had outdone himself in praise and abnegation to him whom the world scorned as a contemptible homosexual. And finally, to a man of letters it must have meant a good deal to have his idea heralded as great and inspiring by a person who unquestionably

¹⁵ Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:14-23. For the date of the letter see *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:234.

counted for something in the intellectual world. Yet for more than three months Johannes Müller did not even bother to acknowledge this letter! And before he finally did so he required additional prompting from Gentz, who was left to grumble that no sort of stimulation came to relieve "the monotony of everything that is now happening in the world."¹⁶

Actually, a great deal was happening in the world, but the center of initiative had shifted to St. Petersburg; and Gentz, who with good reason had been kept in the dark by Cobenzl, was now doubly ignorant of events in Europe's foreign offices. On April 11 England and Russia had concluded an alliance that was definitely belligerent in spirit. This alliance had been preceded by one between England and Sweden. Already irritated by the continuation of French aggression in Italy, the Austrians found their hands forced by these developments. After the usual hesitation and with the utmost secrecy the Hofburg finally, in July, became a party to the Anglo-Russian alliance. Cobenzl thus formally embraced one of the policies urged by Gentz in his memoir to Archduke John. Between the vice-chancellor and the war party there were no longer any real differences, except those sharp personal antagonisms that the events of the past two years and a half had engendered. Thus, though Cobenzl espoused the war policy, he renewed his assault upon Archduke Carl and the War Department, this time with complete success. Duka was replaced by Mack, the slippery Fasbender was shorn of his power, and Carl's dignity as head of the war ministry was made largely nominal with the establishment of a Council of War with authority independent of his control.¹⁷

In April Gentz noticed that Cobenzl had "changed so much . . . that one would no longer recognize him." Still convinced, however, of the vice-chancellor's determination to stay out of war if it could possibly be done, Gentz continued through July and August to bombard his correspondents in Berlin—Jackson and Johannes von Müller—with what proved to be specious arguments showing that war would not come. If any of these letters had fallen into the hands of Napoleon's spies, they would have created precisely the impression desired by Cobenzl, who hoped to convince the French that Austria had no thought of war during the period necessary to place the military resources of the monarchy on a war footing. La Rochefoucauld, the French ambassador in Vienna, was completely fooled, and even Arthur Paget had

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 30.

¹⁷ Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 151-173; Deutsch, *Napoleonic Imperialism*, 257-266, 272-283; Criste, *Erzherzog Carl*, 2:299-307.

been duped. Napoleon, however, with his exact secret intelligence of the military activity going on in the Habsburg lands, was better informed.¹⁸

Preening himself on his knowledge of men and on his powers of political analysis, Gentz was riding for a well-deserved fall. He made his crowning blunder in July: at the very time when Cobenzl was about to complete the military alliance with Russia and England he gave the vice-chancellor some gratuitous and sharply worded criticism for his failure to protest vigorously against Napoleon's annexation of Genoa. Cobenzl returned "a bitter answer," an answer that Gentz's conduct had certainly invited, as later he ruefully admitted: "I could not justly complain about the secrecy observed toward me in this matter; my contact with Cobenzl had almost entirely ceased for some time, and it was just as much my fault as his."¹⁹

Gentz now paid dearly for his long and valued associations with such opponents of Cobenzl as Rasumovsky, Armfeldt, and particularly Arthur Paget. As the confidant of Paget, Gentz fell under the distrust with which the Vienna government regarded that difficult young diplomat. And since Gentz's usefulness to Paget and to England depended upon his access to confidential sources of information, his credit was greatly weakened in London when it became manifest that such sources of information were no longer open to him.

Gentz, however, still unaware of his miscalculations, which were soon to nullify his efforts, began in April to write a book that was designed, in part at least, to keep the British statesmen favorably disposed toward him. At that time England still valued his services, for a payment of one thousand pounds sterling on March 15 was followed on April 3 by another thousand pounds. These very substantial sums were immediately exhausted in discharging his debts to bankers and to other urgent creditors in England. Obviously he meant the new book to ensure his retention of this happy source of credit. The work, which he rapidly brought to completion, was an elaborate apology for the English course of action, which had culminated the year before in the outbreak of war with Spain. Its text of one hundred and eighty-five pages was bulwarked by as many more of documents, and its anti-French bias was so strong that the Prussian censors would not let Froelich publish it in Berlin, except in a deleted form that was thoroughly unacceptable to Gentz. After lengthy negotiation the harassed author, with the aid of friends,

¹⁸ Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 40-42, 46; Deutsch, *Napoleonic Imperialism*, 284-285; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:53-57, 66, 71-74, 88.

¹⁹ Schlesier, *Mémoires et lettres de Gentz*, 61-70; *Tagebücher*, 1:40-41.

persuaded the publisher Hartknoch to bring out the book in Saxony in a form that suited him. On the title page the place of publication, flagrantly falsified, was declared to be St. Petersburg. Gentz sought to get an English version published also: he wrote to Hammond and to Lord Mulgrave, who were now the top-notch men in the foreign office; he persuaded the faithful Vansittart to wield his influence in behalf of the project; he cajoled and entreated the Second Earl of Liverpool; even Pitt was besieged. But no English version seems ever to have appeared.

Not until early September did Gentz realize the errors in his predictions of the preceding months. "The war is breaking," he finally admitted two days before the Austrian troops crossed the Inn! Coming from a man who made his livelihood by political soothsaying, this belated pronouncement was scarcely impressive.²⁰

Gentz's bounding spirits were quite equal, however, to the new situation, and two days after the formal declaration of war he made his peace with Cobenzl. Although fully aware that the Russian and Austrian governments were in the hands of men who did not measure up to the task, and though he doubted General Mack's military ability,²¹ nevertheless, now that war had come, he welcomed it. There were difficulties, but they were not insurmountable; and with ordinary luck Napoleon could be soundly thrashed. The great desideratum which could assure this hoped-for outcome was Prussia's membership in the coalition. Gentz redoubled his efforts to make Prussia see the light.

Upon the failure of Cobenzl's overtures at Berlin in the autumn of 1804, St. Petersburg took the initiative. In February the czar sent his aide-de-camp, Baron Wintzingerode, to Berlin, to urge anew the accession of Prussia to a defensive coalition. As usual the Prussians wavered, and, as before, they finally rejected the proposals. The Russians henceforth were more than ever convinced that Prussia would take sides only if forced to do so when war broke out; and Metternich and Cobenzl, discouraged about the possibilities of accomplishing anything in Berlin by negotiation, agreed grudgingly that only a policy of bellig-

²⁰ Weil, *D'Ulm à Léna*, 45, 57, 237-240; Alfred Stern, ed., "Briefe von Friedrich Gentz aus den Jahren 1805-1808," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für oesterreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 21 (1900):111-114; *Tagebücher*, 1:38, 39; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:286-288; 2:267; Gentz to Froelich, April 30, September 18, 1805, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 94, IV, N.b.2., Fol. 49; Gentz to the Second Earl of Liverpool, August 18, 1805, in the British Museum, Add. 38241, f. 198; Gentz to Lord Mulgrave, August 29, 1805, P.R.O., London, F.O., 7/76; Mauer-Constant, ed., *Beiträge zur Geschichte Deutschlands in den Jahren 1805-1809*, 11; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:99; Häusser, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 2:486. Gentz's book bore the title *Authentische Darstellung des Verhältnisses zwischen England und Spanien vor und bei dem Ausbruche des Kriegs zwischen beiden Mächten*, and forms volume 3 of Weick's *Ausgewählte Schriften von Gentz*.

²¹ Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:88, 89.

erent threats could serve their purpose with men like Frederick William III, Hardenberg, and Haugwitz.²²

Gentz had no sympathy for what he considered disgraceful suberviency on the part of Prussia toward Napoleon. When, in April, after Frederick William III and Napoleon had exchanged decorations, Gustavus IV returned his Prussian Order of the Black Eagle, with the pointed slur that he did not choose to share it with a Corsican upstart, Gentz congratulated Gustavus with a high-flown memorial. But the policy of forcing Prussia to take sides drew from him sharp criticism. His own attitude was that those who sincerely desired active friendship between the two great German powers should be encouraged to make their influence felt in the councils of state. Still convinced, in the summer of 1805, that Archduke John of Austria and Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia had the best chance of achieving this desired result, Gentz became the intermediary in a lively correspondence between the two young men. "To bring such men into power is actually the most essential problem for us," he declared. But when Louis Ferdinand again presented Gentz's ideas on an Austro-Prussian alliance to Hardenberg in July, he received the opaque reply: "Where are the great men . . . who would be the driving forces and souls of such undertakings?" Obviously Hardenberg knew the Gentzian questions, but he lacked the answers which Gentz, with his Panins, Windhams, Archduke Johns — and Louis Ferdinands — had on the tip of his tongue.²³

The outbreak of war in September found the Prussians as far removed from the coalition as ever. Frederick William III's sympathies lay with the allies, but their threats aroused his vigorous resentment; he still wanted to remain neutral if he could. The Austrian government sent General Merveldt to Berlin early in September to sound out the Prussians once more and to see whether they could be moved at the last minute to change their minds. Gentz, who had sent with Merveldt a memoir for Frederick William and a letter for Hardenberg, thought there were strong grounds for hope that the general would succeed in his mission. Actually the Prussian king remained firmly committed throughout September to his own system, and his troops stood massed on the eastern frontier to repel any Russian trifling with his precious

²² Deutsch, *Napoleonic Imperialism*, 306-309.

²³ Schlesier, *Mémoires et lettres de Gentz*, 79-104; *Tagebücher*, 1:40; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. xxxii, xxxiii, 34; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:62, 75, 79; Criste, *Erzherzog Carl*, 2:309-311; Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 53-60; August Fournier, "Erzherzog Johann und Friedrich Gentz," in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 19, 1878; Griewank, "Hardenberg und die preussische Politik," in *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte*, 47:260-261; Wahl, *Louis Ferdinand*, 272.

neutrality. Realizing finally the futility of threats, the czar became all at once conciliatory and asked for a personal interview, which was granted. "Only by such methods is the king of Prussia to be won — and I am always preaching that here," declared the jubilant Gentz. "Not ministers, not even the wisest ministers — indeed these least of all because he does not trust them — but reigning emperors, archdukes, etc., have influence with him. Now or never: if the king of Prussia bursts in, Bonaparte is lost. Would one really survive that joy?" ²⁴

For a brief period early in October it seemed that Frederick William would certainly burst in. On October 6 he had once more made it clear to the Russians that any violation of Prussia's neutrality would be forcibly resisted. Scarcely were the words out of his mouth when news arrived that the French, rather than the Russians, had crossed Prussian territory: as the armies of Napoleon converged in a great encircling movement on Mack's forces, which were concentrated around Ulm, the troops of Bernadotte had entered Frederick William's domains at Ansbach. A howl of rage went up all over Prussia; even the pacific king and the pro-French Duke of Brunswick were thoroughly aroused. On October 9 Metternich reported to Colloredo: "Hardenberg has stated confidentially that the king has passed to our side with all his forces." For the allies dawned the brightest days that 1805 was to offer. Gentz anticipated the short-lived optimism when he wrote, on October 7, to his dear friend Adam Müller: "I have just received a long and exceptionally moving letter from Louis XVIII written in his own hand. He has asked my advice about a project which they drew up in Mitau and thought of carrying out with English and Russian support. I had to advise *against it*. . . . It is not yet the time and hour for a Bourbon undertaking. First Bonaparte must be whipped, humbled, led back into France's old boundaries, and made thoroughly pliable before *that* can be tried. What luck, what bliss, that we dare speak of such things again as possible, perhaps — certainly, if Prussia ordains it — as likely, as near at hand!" On the same day he wrote in similar mood to Metternich: "Everything that has happened during the past two months is a dream. Will this dream give way to a sad awakening?" ²⁵

²⁴ Deutsch, *Napoleonic Imperialism*, 362–367; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:100; Wittmer, "Ligne, Müller, Gentz, et l'Autriche," in *Annales Prince de Ligne*, 6 (1925):163, note; Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 180, note; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 30, note; Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 64–67; Fournier, "Erzherzog Johann und Friedrich Gentz," in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 19, 1878; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 58.

²⁵ Deutsch, *Napoleonic Imperialism*, 367–371; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 59–60; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 33.

Alas, the dream did vanish in a trice, and the awakening was rude: on October 17 General Mack, finding himself surrounded at Ulm, capitulated without further ado. It was a cruel and disheartening blow, but it was not necessarily a decisive one. Much depended on Prussia, and during the week before Ulm Prussia had committed herself deeply. In the next weeks as Napoleon's army marched down the Danube, occupying Vienna and driving Friedrich Gentz to take refuge first in Tropau and then in Breslau, the Prussian government hedged and waited to see what would happen next. That was the course naturally to be expected of Prussia. Her guiding spirits were hesitant men; and the Prussian generals, furthermore, had demanded that the diplomats gain two months' delay while the army was put on a war footing. "I have never flattered myself that we should succeed in producing a sudden revolution in the system of the king of Prussia," Gentz had remarked with fatal accuracy on September 25.²⁶ Having failed to win Prussia's accession to the coalition before war began, the allies ought to have played for time. Instead Mack lurched into the enemy's arms at Ulm and on December 2 the Russians precipitated the *coup de grâce* at Austerlitz.

During the six momentous weeks between Ulm and Austerlitz Frederick William was going through the painfully tortuous process of making up his mind. When the French marched into Ansbach, he was shocked enough to lose faith at last in his neutrality system. Slowly he edged toward war, feeling every step of the way, now pulling up sharply, now cringing as he peered over the brink, now retreating, now advancing. Confusingly divergent activities marked the ponderous development of the monarch's new policy. He conferred personally with the czar; Lord Harrowby came from London to bargain over British gold; Count Haugwitz wandered off unhappily on a mission to French headquarters. The Prussian king, having once taken his line, seems to have moved on toward his decision with the sluggish inevitability of flowing lava. Even Austerlitz failed to daunt him. A week after the battle, "Alexander was notified . . . that the Prussian armies had been ordered to move upon the French by the most direct route!" At this point the Austrians and Russians decided that they had had enough. Francis agreed to an armistice with Napoleon, and Alexander resolved to take his soldiers back to Russia. Like a fighting cock that has lost heart in the contest after ruffling the feathers of its neck belligerently,

²⁶ Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 65-67.

Prussia suddenly tried to look innocent and gazed carefully off into space.²⁷

Between Ulm and Austerlitz Gentz had been kept squirming by the tantalizing twists, plunges, and reversals of Prussian policy. His moods capricious, his judgments hasty, he pieced together scraps of information from day to day and sought to orient himself and others to the constantly changing situation. His chief positive endeavor was to keep the English informed of conditions on the Continent and to advise them of the course they should pursue to meet successfully the new circumstances as they arose. He wrote frequently to Hammond in the foreign office, to Starhemberg, the Austrian ambassador at London, and to Jackson, the British envoy in Berlin. Until the last minute his chief hope was that England would hold out the kind of bait that would tempt the timid but avaricious Prussians to enter the war. In a letter to Hammond on November 1, he urged that the British go so far as to propose a partition of Germany between Austria and Prussia. This sort of proposal would have appealed particularly to Hardenberg, but the British were far from ready to espouse anything so imaginative. Although Hammond accompanied the infirm Harrowby when he went to Berlin early in November to try his feeble powers of persuasion on the Prussians, and although Gentz's letters—so he presumed—all reached Hammond, his advice was not acted upon. The British were far more interested in making clear to the Prussians that they were unready to surrender any of their claims in Hanover than they were in magnanimous projects for the division of Germany between Austria and Prussia. "In consequence the negotiations between Harrowby and Hardenberg soon arrived at an impasse, and nothing had been settled when the day of Austerlitz decided the fate of the coalition."²⁸

Gentz blamed the English bitterly for the unhappy outcome of the 1805 campaign. "The fundamental error lay in London," he told Johannes Müller on December 14, and he went on to castigate the British ministry for its childlike ignorance of foreign affairs and its refusal to learn anything. Not only that: the British suddenly neglected to make the usual deposit with Coutts and Company, and Gentz's creditors in Vienna began to be annoying. To give the final touch to an already ominous situation, Jackson in Berlin announced without warn-

²⁷ The diplomatic background of the campaign of 1805 is treated exhaustively in part 5 of Harold Deutsch's excellent work.

²⁸ Stern, "Briefe von Gentz," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 21:130-133; Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 106-107; Deutsch, *Napoleonic Imperialism*, 395-396; Griewank, "Hardenberg und die preussische Politik," in *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte*, 47:230-233.

ing that the correspondence which he and Gentz had been carrying on was at an end. When shortly thereafter Gentz received news of the death of Pitt, he was moved only to comment that in some ways he regarded Pitt's death as beneficial to both England and Europe.²⁹

This harsh judgment does not represent Gentz's considered opinion of the great English prime minister, but it does indicate his state of mind during the months that immediately followed Austerlitz. He had helped sow the wind, he was reaping the storm; and he reacted in all-too-human fashion by blaming everybody else in sight. Colloredo, Cobenzl, and their associates had paid the price of unsuccessful leadership by losing their much prized offices, and the unfortunate Mack faced a court-martial. Gentz would have considered it a gross insult to have been lumped with Cobenzl, Colloredo, and Mack, but he shared their disfavor nonetheless, and to some extent it was only just that he should. He had been proud to consider himself a leader in the marshaling of anti-Napoleonic opinion and policy, and he had expressed himself vigorously and often in wise and statesmanlike counsel. But he had also failed frequently to harness his feelings and desires to the dictates of his reason, and there had been in consequence much chaff amidst the Gentzian wheat. He had done his share—how much it is impossible to estimate—to bring on war before the scene was properly laid, and to say that an ill-prepared war was far removed from his aim does not exonerate him.

Gentz at the time enjoyed all the self-satisfaction which carefree activity can give, and it was a cruel blow to discover that the new Austrian ministry, headed by his old friend and well-wisher, Count Stadion, was in no hurry to return him to Vienna so that the government could benefit by his presence and advice. In the preceding government a certain *Hofrat* Collenbach was popularly supposed to have had an enormous influence over Cobenzl, and Gentz had played with the idea that he might be the Collenbach of the new regime. With an air of noble resignation he had told Hammond: "I should regard the duty of assuming this office as the greatest of all misfortunes. If the emperor should offer it to me today, exile or prison would frighten me less. This is not to say that I should refuse it, since I am determined to do everything and to sacrifice everything, if I can contribute to the public welfare."³⁰

²⁹ Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:159-160; Paget, *Paget Papers*, 2:259; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 48-49.

³⁰ Stern, "Briefe von Gentz," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für oesterreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 21:135-136; Thürheim, *Starhemberg*, 335.

The emperor called for no such sacrifice from his modest subject; instead he sent word that Gentz was to be especially careful about what he said or wrote. Gentz protested with injured innocence that he would not tolerate such a stipulation. "I am in no wise in a position where anyone has to *pardon* me for something respecting the past; and with respect to the future I expect encouragement, not lectures." To Stadion, whom he now saw "only as a somewhat better-costumed Cobenzl," he wrote a forthright letter stating just where he stood. "The times are too important and serious," he explained to Fasbender, with whom he continued on good terms, "for me to be satisfied to live in Vienna as a leisurely observer. Either specific direct influence, or complete freedom to serve in my own way the cause to which I have dedicated my life — on no other terms am I going back to Vienna!"³¹

Stadion knew precisely how to put Gentz in his place. He ignored the letter. Another, which Gentz wrote on March 25, 1806, Stadion likewise ignored. Gentz had moved on from Breslau to Dresden, and his lot was an uneasy one. "The silence of my court," his diary states, "offended me more deeply than the most vehement chiding would have done. . . . My financial situation was not edifying: I had pressing debts in Vienna, and how it would stand in the future with the English resources was not to be calculated. Meanwhile I went forward with bold lightheartedness. I lived in the Golden Angel and let myself want for nothing. . . . I borrowed as much as was necessary for my respectable appearance."³²

By May 9 Gentz had reached the point where he was willing to eat humble pie. In a letter addressed direct to Emperor Francis he admitted that his position on "the proscription list of the enemy" and the necessity for the Austrian cabinet to conciliate Napoleon made it impossible for him to be used in Vienna, for the time being at least. He asked only for a word of assurance that when times changed the Habsburg state would avail itself of his services. The fate of this overture is indicated by the following laconic statement in his diary under the date of June 23, 1806: "I received letters from Count Stadion and from the emperor which made me decide definitely not to return to Vienna."³³

Gentz's regular salary from Vienna continued, but there could no longer be the slightest doubt that his official position was that of an

³¹ Jacubenz, "Gentz und Fasbender," in *Mitteilungen des kaiserlichen und königlichen Kriegsarchivs*, 7:80; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 43.

³² *Ibid.*; *Tagebücher*, 1:46.

³³ Klinkowström, *Aus der alten Registratur*, 11-13; *Tagebücher*, 1:46-47; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 83.

exile pro tem. There was no telling when the Austrian government would again desire his services. Gentz was more than ever determined to continue the fight against Napoleon with the weapons at his disposal, and several months before the letters from Stadion and the emperor clarified his position with regard to Austria, he had begun to send out feelers in other directions. In February he had found some encouragement in the renewal of his correspondence with Jackson in Berlin, and the curious Ministry of All the Talents filled him with great hopes. "In a few months," he had informed Metternich on February 16, "you will see a new life and a new spirit develop in England." He was confident of the ability of the Grenvilles, Lord Spencer, Lord Minto, and Windham to nullify the influence of Fox and Sheridan. During the first months of 1806 various Englishmen were deluged with a flood of Gentzian communications and memoirs. Among them was a letter, dated March 25, to the Duke of Orleans, which contained these self-explanatory words: "I have long considered it the height of good fortune and of glory to be able to serve England even in the most indirect manner. I am (all *amour-propre* aside) the one who, of all men on the Continent, would be able to render the greatest service to England, if anyone desired it and knew how to employ me. . . . The answer I receive to the letter I have today written to Lord Grenville will decide my future. . . . If I see any favorable chances to consecrate all my strength to the public cause, I shall fear nothing. . . . More independent than ever (for I am free to sever my connection with the court of Vienna), I shall vow to breathe my last in the agonizing and expiring—but not lost—cause of Europe and England. If Lord Grenville's reply is cold, equivocal, or negative, you will not hear my name spoken for a long while. I shall work for posterity, but I shall be dead to my contemporaries."³⁴

Lord Grenville, however, like Stadion, received Gentz's importunities in stolid silence. Stadion had good reason for his attitude, as Gentz knew, but not so the British. England was still at war with France, and by June the ascendancy that Napoleon had gained over Prussia after Austerlitz had brought Berlin's declaration of war on England. With the departure of her own diplomatic representatives from Prussia, England needed the kind of expert information about Germany that Gentz could send, and was sending, from Dresden.

³⁴ Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 177; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 49-50; Thürheim, *Starhemberg*, 346-347. The references to Gentz's letters and memoirs to Englishmen are to be found in: Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 175, 178, 180-182; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:207, 209-212, 217-222; Thürheim, *Starhemberg*, 342, 344; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:274, note.

No sign of appreciation, monetary or otherwise, went out to the stalwart defender of the Good Cause. He wailed: "It is the enthusiasm of despair that animates me to go on working like a fool, when everything that I have the faith to touch is already dead or impotent. I feel that my career is drawing toward its end, and that Sirius and Orion are already waiting for me, and after them the tomb." Visions of the tomb were only transitory, happily; and on September 7 Gentz wrote again, and with all his old vitality, to Grenville: "The complete disgrace into which I have fallen in England (no one has deigned to answer the thirty or forty letters that I have successively addressed there to different people in the past six months) ought to disgust me forever. . . . But the thought of what I owe to the most important cause of my time impels me to make this observation: now is the time when I could render the most positive kind of service, if anyone wished to employ me or even to encourage me. None of those who write to London can know half the things I am told, which are relayed to me from all sides. . . . Time is pressing; I cannot weigh and leash my words; but I dare say you are preparing regrets for yourself if . . . you neglect this advice."³⁵

Ignored by Britain, shunned by Austria, and filled with a "deep and insurmountable aversion toward the policy of the Prussian court," Gentz certainly found the actual and potential enemies of Napoleon among the Great Powers highly indifferent to his counsels during the first eight months of 1806. Looking back, he might have acknowledged that Johannes Müller had spoken with wisdom when he had proclaimed immediately after Austerlitz that the banks of the Neva or Volga would be the only congenial places henceforth where persistent Napoleon-haters could spend their days. At the time, Gentz had dismissed the suggestion with a loathing shudder. "I hate the cold like death," he had declared, "and after cold, death, and the French, I hate nothing so heartily as the Russians. Although I have traveled, lived, and done everything but sleep with a Russian princess for four weeks, that hate has increased during precisely those four weeks to a remarkable degree."³⁶

Contact with the Russians always aroused this feeling in Gentz; still he did not neglect them, and it was only in St. Petersburg that his activities met with official favor in the first part of 1806. On the very day when he had expressed himself in such derogatory terms about the

³⁵ Kipe, *Gentz a Polska*, 145-146; Paget, *Paget Papers*, 2:277; *Fortescue Manuscripts*, 9:457-458.

³⁶ Klinkowström, *Aus der alten Registratur*, 10-11; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:152-167.

Russians, he sent a memoir to Czartoryski; and soon Czartoryski, forgetting all his old complaints against Gentz, was hailing him as an "enthusiastic partisan of the Good Cause," and advising the emperor that by showing Gentz "that one appreciates his talents, one could request him to send, from time to time, the result of his observation on the general European situation, and particularly his ideas on the means of forming a vigorous administration at Vienna." Czartoryski's recommendation was carried out. Memoirs from the exile at Dresden began to penetrate to the banks of the Neva, and early in August Gentz's diary records the receipt of "a letter from Prince Czartoryski, with a ring (worth twelve hundred to fifteen hundred thaler) from Emperor Alexander." It was the first tangible token for months that a European government appreciated his activities, and it indicated that the European situation had again prompted friends of the Good Cause to rally together.³⁷

³⁷ Weil, *D'Ulm à léna*, 155-156; *Sbornik imperatorskago russkago istoricescka obscestva*, 82:331 (St. Petersburg, 1891); Kipe, *Gentz a Polska*, 116-117; *Tagebücher*, 1:47.

THE NATIONALIST
1805-1809

9. The End of Prussian Neutrality

IN THE campaign of 1805, the inadequacy of its military system had made the House of Habsburg look like a house of cards. The Habsburgs had come to symbolize the old regime: was the old regime as weak as a house of cards? Friedrich Gentz feared that it was, but he was not destitute of all hope: "We shall surely go to ruin in a very short time, if we do not succeed, under pressure of the utmost distress and by means of the most formidable exertions, in bringing entirely new weapons into the arena," he wrote Metternich on January 12, 1806. There was wisdom in these words, but there was a catch in them also. Could the fire be fought successfully with anything but fire? Could imperialistic nationalism be fought successfully with anything but nationalism? The cure looked as bad as the disease to the rulers of Austria, who knew that to make war in itself nationally popular was to loose a force that might too easily be turned against them.¹

Since going to Vienna Gentz had played the game of politics in accordance with the rules of the Habsburg court. He had accepted the fact that policies were largely made by a small hereditary ruling caste and had attempted no more than to influence individuals in key positions through the private communication of countless letters and memoirs. "To what purpose should I write now?" he asked. "There is no longer any suggestion of public opinion so far as the great events of the world are concerned; it has become altogether dormant; three or four cabinets absolutely determine the fate of mankind. . . . This handful of men . . . is not at all concerned about what the public thinks and says and writes and reads. If these men are to be guided to a sound policy (the possibility of which I doubt), they must certainly be moved by entirely other means than books."²

¹ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 42-43; H. Butterfield, *The Peace Tactics of Napoleon, 1806-1808* (Cambridge, 1929), 319-320.

² *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:280.

A feeling that the existing system lacked some essential is clearly implicit in the above statement. Policies divorced from the masses, policies that failed to tap the immeasurably important resources of popular enthusiasm, would never be able, in Gentz's opinion, to cope successfully with a Napoleon. "It is incontestable," he had written on the eve of the war, "that unless a great revolution is produced in the thought of the people, all the Macks and Suvorovs that heaven can send us will fail in their undertaking."³

Cobenzl could see the point in theory, but in practice he believed that an aroused public opinion should be *created* to support policies once they were definitely set in motion. For at the Hofburg policies were made; public opinion was created. To conceive of policy as growing out of, as representing or seeming to represent the public will, was foreign to the nature of the entire system. It was typical of the Austrian diplomacy that Gentz had been put to work on a book of popular appeal *after* the war had started. Gentz could write with speed, but to write and publish a book in less than three months is difficult. Napoleon, however, had found it simple to beat the Austrians in three months.

Since leaving Berlin, Gentz had become more self-consciously German than ever before. His contact with the French on his journey to England in 1802 had brought an outburst of nationalistic feeling. The most eloquent portion of his memoir to Archduke John had been in the same vein, as was also his correspondence with Johannes von Müller throughout 1805. The leaders whom he wanted most to see in charge of the destinies of Austria and Prussia were men like Louis Ferdinand and Archduke John, who had popular appeal and dash, who knew how to assume naturally the *volkstümlich* air. An Austro-Prussian alliance rising spontaneously as the result of national demand — that represented Gentz's idea of the superlatively desirable. In the process of defeating Napoleon he was willing to see old Germany swept to pieces and united at a future time around the two focal points of Vienna and Berlin. His views anticipated those of the Freiherr vom Stein, who would have preferred a genuine national state but perceived a tendency for the German state to separate into two great parts.⁴

In accordance with Cobenzl's desire that he arouse popular enthusiasm for the opening campaign Gentz set to work immediately on a book bearing the title *Fragmente aus der neuesten Geschichte des politischen Gleichgewichts in Europa*. The quick decision of the war nullified the

³ Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 57.

⁴ Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:179–180; Klaus Thiede, *Die Staats- und Wirtschaftsauffassung des Freiherrn vom Stein* (Jena, 1927), 83.

original purpose of this volume, but Gentz succeeded in permeating its ambitious introduction with dynamic vigor, in spite of the atmosphere of defeat about him. Designed to reach a larger audience than he had ever before addressed, the introduction attained a rhetorical verve that on the purely literary side surpassed anything to be found in his other writings.⁵

"Europe fell because of Germany's weakness," he pointed out. "Through Germany's strength Europe must rise again. . . . Our fatal internal discord, the frittering away of our glorious powers, the rivalry of our princes and the estrangement of their subjects, the extinction of every genuine feeling for the common interest of the nation, the prostration of the patriotic spirit—these have been the conquerors, these have been the destroyers of our freedom, these have been our deadly enemies and the enemies of Europe. . . . Divided we fell. Only when united can we rise again. To enter upon this single road to salvation is, to be sure, much more difficult now than it was earlier. But this much is irrefutably certain: should the *political strength* of Germany ever become united, it must be preceded by unity of the *national will*." ⁶

Many Prussians who read Gentz's book at the time missed its point entirely. They jumped to the conclusion that Gentz's nationalism was the same brand as their own, which was in reality no more than a blustering, acquisitive selfishness. When a few years later Gentz expressed his disgust at the prancing pretensions of Blücher's army, he was applying the same standards to exaggerated Prussian nationalism that had led him to condemn the "blind, idiotic, brazen-faced national pride" of the Russians in 1805.⁷ But outraged Prussians rose in their wrath and shouted, "Turn-coat!"

The charge was unjustified. True, Gentz regarded nationalism as good in itself; it was desirable, he believed, for peoples to be vigilantly jealous of their "national honor" and to conserve at all costs "a respected name."⁸ But there were interests that transcended national interests—the interests of Europe as a whole. Only with manifestations of particular nationalisms that contributed to the general welfare of Europe

⁵ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:272; vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 55; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:214; Thürheim, *Starhemberg*, 249; *Tagebücher*, 1:46. The *Edinburgh Review*, in a lengthy notice of the *Fragmente*, could see in the introduction, however, only "a long and laboured harangue." *Edinburgh Review*, 9:257.

⁶ The *Fragmente* was reprinted in volume 4 of Weick's *Ausgewählte Schriften von Gentz*, and more recently in *Friedrich von Gentz: Staatsschriften und Briefe*, edited by H. von Eckardt (2 vols., Munich, 1921), 1:110–112. My citations are from the latter publication.

⁷ Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:158.

⁸ Eckardt, *Gentz: Staatsschriften und Briefe*, 1:97.

would Gentz have anything to do. In 1806 he not only believed that a healthy German nationalism *might* contribute to European well-being; he was convinced that the restoration of a Europe whose political foundations rested on balance of power was contingent upon a more pronounced expression of the essential oneness of the German people. "I am not an Austrian, a Prussian, an Englishman, or a Russian," he wrote to Czartoryski. "At the same time may God keep me from being a cosmopolitan, a term which I abhor above all others, and which I regard as a real insult. I am a German, and I am German in every sense of the word. The liberty, the prosperity, and the glory of Germany — these in a nutshell are the objectives that lie closest to my heart. Since, however, these objectives in the present situation are so closely connected with the common good of Europe that Germany has not a single real interest that is not at the same time the interest of all its neighbors, and since anything that restores and sustains Germany also restores and sustains the entire social order, it is clear that no partisan or equivocal motive can ever guide me in my researches."⁹

This statement to Czartoryski is interesting from more than one point of view. Though Gentz indicated clearly that he thought of himself as a European as well as a German, the casual reader, unacquainted with the full body of his writings and taking this statement in isolation, might pardonably conclude that he considered himself primarily a German and only incidentally a European. It should be pointed out, however, that when he addressed fiery patriots or fell under their immediate influence, his pen and his tongue sometimes ran away with him. Knowing that Czartoryski was a confirmed Polish nationalist, he probably expressed himself with more nationalistic emphasis than he realized. The Freiherr vom Stein, who had ample opportunity to learn Gentz's opinions, placed his nationalism in its true setting when he wrote on April 20, 1809: "You may be sure that I honor and value you beyond measure because of your correct views of the relations of the European states, and because of the courage, steadfastness, and spirit with which you have defended the cause of lawful order and that of the freedom of nations arising from the balance of power."¹⁰ Stein, it may be added, would have stressed the phrase "freedom of nations," whereas Gentz emphasized "balance of power."

Another interesting aspect of Gentz's statement to Czartoryski de-

⁹ Kipe, *Gentz a Polska*, 121-122.

¹⁰ Robinet de Cléry, *Idées politiques de Gentz*, 216-217; *Freiherr vom Stein: Briefwechsel, Denkschriften, und Aufzeichnungen*, edited by Erich Botzenhart (7 vols., Berlin, 1931-37), 3:109.

rives not from what he actually said, but from what he could not say to a man charged with the conduct of Russian foreign policy. Namely this: Gentz's concern for the future of the European balance of power was not limited to the immediate situation created by Napoleon. At the moment, of course, the actual enemy was France, and France must be thrown back again beyond the Rhine. But even if France were defeated, Russia could still overturn the balance — if Germany remained the same as in 1789. Gentz's wish for a nationalistically awakened Germany was inspired, therefore, not merely by the actual danger from France, but also by the potential danger from Russia. A political organism expressive of the national will of the German people and linked by strong bonds of friendship to the maritime power of Britain would both solve the problems of the present and ensure an era of stability, based on balance of power, in the future. So may be summarized the Gentzian political wisdom as it had become crystallized by 1806.¹¹

In spite of the statesmanlike sweep of his views, Gentz was in no less of a political dilemma in 1806 than he had been in 1803, 1804, and 1805. The dilemma was this: Could a carefully nurtured nationalistic war spirit in Germany be sufficiently controlled to operate effectively with the careful secretive diplomacy that Napoleon's position astride Europe seemed to dictate? Gentz met the dilemma, to use a modern simile, by pushing down the accelerator with one foot and jamming on the brake with the other. His book, *Fragmente aus der neuesten Geschichte des politischen Gleichgewichts in Europa*, was doing its share to whip up nationalistic antagonism to Napoleon and to abet the party of war hawks who had almost swept Prussia into the conflict in 1805. Simultaneously in his memoirs, particularly to Czartoryski, who was the only responsible official with whom he remained on good terms in 1806, Gentz urged consistently a policy of moderation and temporization.

To understand this situation we must recall the events in Europe during the first seven or eight months after the battle of Austerlitz and the Peace of Pressburg. On February 15, 1806, Prussia entered a defensive alliance with Napoleon, closed her North Sea ports to the British, and was allowed in return to annex Hanover. In July Napoleon organized the southern and western German states into the Confederation of the Rhine. The British and the Russians entered into extended negotiations with the French in the hope of establishing peace, while Prussia drifted unhappily into war with both England and Sweden. Still reeling

¹¹ See Gentz to Starhemberg, April 2, 1806, in Thürheim, *Starhemberg*, 341.

from her recent defeat, Austria needed time to recuperate before attempting positive action.

Gentz was not blind to realities; on June 22 he expressed himself as follows in a communication to Czartoryski: "My principles and my views are now the same as those which the new English ministry has chosen as a guide for its conduct. It is necessary to seek an interval of peace to gain time and strength."¹² A memoir completed in August, which he said was one of the most difficult pieces of work he had ever undertaken, elaborates his position. Czartoryski, the recipient, was no longer, however, the leading official in Russia's Department of Foreign Affairs.¹³

Gentz argued that a truce was necessary until Austria and Prussia, moving in closest harmony, should be able to act as the spearheads of a new coalition against France. Once the truce was achieved, England and Russia must not relax their efforts, complacent in the thought that they could neither defeat nor be defeated by France. Russia should seize the occasion to attack Turkey, and England should nab the Spanish colonies in South America, which in Gentz's opinion were hers for the taking. These conquests should be accompanied by the solemn declaration that they were inspired by "no motive of private interest," and that the colonies would be gladly surrendered whenever Napoleon disgorged his ill-won gains. As an afterthought, with the news of the formation of the Confederation of the Rhine fresh in his mind, Gentz added that the Austrian emperor ought to "transfer his residence to Hungary, create there a true constitution, establish new connections between Hungary, Bohemia, Galicia, and the residue of his German possessions, and found a new monarchy, which can become powerful and respectable but which will scarcely resemble the monarchy he previously governed."¹⁴

Scarcely had Gentz's memoir gone on its way to Czartoryski when the European landscape showed signs of a new and totally unexpected upheaval. The Prussian government had for months followed a course that Fox described accurately as "the union of everything that was contemptible in civility with everything that was odious in rapacity."¹⁵ More than ever, Berlin appeared to be a mere satellite of Paris. The increasingly

¹² Kipe, *Gentz a Polska*, 119.

¹³ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:281. See also Kipe, *Gentz a Polska*, 126-127; *Tagebücher*, 1:47.

¹⁴ *Aus dem Nachlasse Friedrichs von Gentz*, edited by Anton Count Prokesch von Osten (2 vols., Vienna, 1868), 2:89-97. This is cited hereafter as *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*.

¹⁵ Quoted by Fremantle in *England in the Nineteenth Century*, 2:155.

numerous and vociferous anti-French party in Prussia, however, stormed the king with demands for a change in the country's policy. Frederick William was not insensible to the strictures that showered thick and fast about him. Late in 1805 he had gone through an emotional experience that made him ready at last to brave a plunge into war with Napoleon, but the force of circumstances had driven him instead to follow a course of tractability that filled him with shame and remorse. He was beset by all the agonizing perplexities that only the very weak and the highly honorable can know. He resolved the difficulty in a fashion that to him was natural, and therefore equivocal. The marriage of convenience with Napoleon, which had been solemnized on February 15, he balanced by a liaison with Alexander, expressed secretly in an agreement ratified by both monarchs early in July, whereby Prussia bound herself not to attack Russia, and Russia undertook to go to the aid of Prussia if France should attack her.¹⁶

Prussian policy during the next fateful months was essentially determined by psychological factors. French troops occupied western and southern Germany, and the threat to Prussian security was acutely realized in Berlin. Whether the threat was actual or potential Prussian leaders did not know, but they were ready to believe the worst. It was a war of nerves, and Prussian nerves were not equal to the strain: in earlier crises Frederick William III had frequently been known to burst into tears.

Though the French forces in Germany were undoubtedly a threat to Prussia, there was no immediate danger. Napoleon was still intent on consolidating his position in southern and western Germany, in keeping an imposing force in the field until peace should be made with the czar, and in diverse projects that had nothing to do with Prussia. Yet the Prussian king was made to believe that the French threat was actual and immediate, that Napoleon was contemplating a sudden invasion of his state. The responsibility for this belief rested primarily with the Prussian agents: alarmist reports showered in from Blücher in western Germany, from the Prussian envoys at Regensburg, Munich, and Dresden, and from Lucchesini in Paris. On August 6 the news came that Napoleon had quietly offered Hanover to England. It was the last straw. Prussia had just annexed Hanover in March, and the king thought that he now had sufficient proof of French duplicity. He ordered most

¹⁶ E. M. Lloyd, "The Third Coalition," in *The Cambridge Modern History* (13 vols., Cambridge, 1902-12), 9:266.

of his troops to be put on a war footing, and let it be known that French troops must withdraw from Germany before Prussian military preparations would cease.¹⁷

At this juncture Napoleon received the impression that the Prussian demands were not made in good faith, and that Prussia and Russia together were contemplating an attack upon him. On July 20 Talleyrand and a Russian plenipotentiary had signed a peace treaty, one of the provisions of which called for French withdrawal from Germany; and Napoleon had actually ordered that preparations for the evacuation be begun. But on September 3 he received word that the czar had refused to ratify the treaty. Promptly he demanded Prussian demobilization and announced that his troops would remain in Germany until Russia made peace. Affairs had reached an impasse. On September 26 Prussia countered with an ultimatum, and on October 8 the French army began its general advance.¹⁸

In the months before the outbreak of hostilities, war feeling in Germany had become widespread and intense. The hysteria among the people had been vastly increased by the arrest and execution, upon Napoleon's order, of Palm, a Nuremberg bookseller, who was convicted for the crime of selling a book entitled *Deutschland in seiner tiefen Erniedrigung*. A typical German close to the event wrote: "The French still take us for sheep; would they otherwise have published the record of Palm's trial? I scarcely find the book in question worth a shot of powder, let alone a bullet. Soon Gentz, Held, and Reichard will be shot in effigy."¹⁹ This statement is particularly illuminating because it indicates the leadership popularly ascribed to Gentz in the molding of anti-French sentiment throughout the country. Indeed Chateaubriand and a number of lesser lights later asserted that Gentz was the author of the book which Palm had been shot for distributing,²⁰ but there is no evidence that he had anything to do with it. The actual writer carefully maintained anonymity. Professor Yelin of Ansbach was once thought to have

¹⁷ Paul Bailleu, ed., *Preussen und Frankreich von 1795 bis 1807* (2 vols., Leipzig, 1881-87), 2:lviii-lxxviii.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, lxxix-lxxx; Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, 7:97; Lloyd, "Third Coalition," in *The Cambridge Modern History*, 9:273-275.

¹⁹ Franz Rühl, ed., *Briefe und Aktenstücke zur Geschichte Preussens unter Friedrich Wilhelm III., vorzugsweise aus dem Nachlasse von F. A. Stägemann* (4 vols., Leipzig, 1899-1902), 1:6.

²⁰ *The Memoirs of François René Vicomte de Chateaubriand*, translated by A. T. de Mattos (6 vols., London, 1902), 3:78-79. A similar statement is made by W. Fitz Patrick, editor of the *Fortescue Manuscripts*, 8:xxxiii, and by George Pellew in *The Life and Correspondence of the Right Honourable Henry Addington, First Viscount Sidmouth* (3 vols., London, 1847), 2:297.

written the volume, but the question of its authorship has never been definitely settled.²¹

As the crisis between France and Prussia developed, Gentz exhibited all the old confusion between his emotions and his reason. Early in August he informed Czartoryski dogmatically that "any war that is made on France without the real cooperation of an Austria and a Prussia whose forces are coordinated—or without the immediate prospect of this cooperation—will be inefficacious, useless, and null, so far as the common interests of Europe are concerned." Six weeks later, when war was breaking, and there was only the remotest chance of Austrian cooperation, Gentz turned around and greeted it with the words: "Courage and hope animate me this time. This war . . . will not be the work of men. Providence itself will have wrought it."²²

Gentz has been characterized as "a man of the eighteenth century in . . . his indifferent suspension of religious observance." But despite his general religious indifference, at times he reasoned himself into the conviction that man must have faith, and that a faith buttressed by the great authority of the church was particularly desirable. Honest enough to recognize, that he himself lacked the capacity for faith, he never took the final step toward Rome, in spite of the zealous and persistent proselytizing of his closest friend, Adam Müller. Müller had become a convert to Catholicism in 1805, and in 1806 he was with Gentz in Dresden. His influence is evident in the words that Gentz addressed to Brinckmann on April 21, 1806: "The way in which religion has again developed in my soul would make me interesting in your eyes. In the truest and deepest sense I have now learned for the first time to comprehend the world correctly, for God has become the beginning and the end of all things to me. Thereby alone have I surmounted the abomination of the times, fear and care, and death. . . . Now everything around me stands in balance; chaos," he concluded mystically, "has become order *in me*."²³

When Gentz resorted to the pious language of his pious Catholic friends, people acquainted with his general outlook taxed him with

²¹ See articles in the Brockhaus and the Meyer encyclopedias. When Peter Will translated and published a portion of Arndt's *Geist der Zeit* at London in 1808, he advertised his wares with the false assertion that this was the book for the distribution of which Palm had been executed (see pp. iii, iv). See also Arndt, *Ausgewählte Werke*, edited by H. Meisner and R. Geerds (Leipzig, n. d.), *Einleitung*, 5-6.

²² *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 2:8; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 59.

²³ Johann Albrecht Rantzau, "Friedrich von Gentz und die Politik," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 43 (1929):78; Klinkowström, *Aus der alten Registratur*, 10-11; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:274.

"levity, inconsistency, or hypocrisy."²⁴ Such critics failed to perceive that he possessed, beneath his veneer of calculating rationality, a warm heart and bounding desires, which sometimes made him forget God's predilection for heavy artillery and persuaded him that Providence itself could perform what to reason appeared impossible. Thus in 1806 Gentz was able not only to hope for victory but to believe in it again.

During the months since Austerlitz Gentz's most valued associations had been with the leaders of the Prussian war party. At the beginning of the year he had spent several days in the company of Louis Ferdinand, and had been agreeably reassured to find the passionate prince "more serious, more determined . . . and more full of life than ever. As long as such men still live," he had reported, "it is impossible to doubt in salvation."²⁵ Early in August Gentz became acquainted with the Freiherr vom Stein, whom he pronounced "the foremost statesman in Germany. If I lived in Berlin," Gentz continued, "I would certainly not leave Stein long unemployed. With his profound views and great character it would only be a question of ensuring him support, for he is fully determined to act."²⁶

Suddenly, in September, the war party found its counsels determining the course pursued by Haugwitz and his associates. To Gentz came a summons to Prussian general headquarters. Mustering all his faith in Louis Ferdinand, Stein—and Providence—Gentz set forth without delay for Naumburg. Here he found a host of important people. The old crowd of Haugwitz, Lombard, and Lucchesini had joined with the war party of Louis Ferdinand, Goetzen, and Queen Louise in the great enterprise upon which Prussia had embarked. Everywhere was bustle, tumult.²⁷

²⁴ *Briefe des Dichters Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werner*, edited by Oswald Floeck (2 vols., Munich, 1914), 2:425–426.

²⁵ Gentz to [Johannes von Müller], Dresden, February 3, 1806, in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Autographa. This letter is said to have been printed in the *Voss'schen Zeitung* of March 29, 1908, but I was not able to avail myself of this paper and quote from the original. See also *Aus Nostitz' Leben*, 69; Wahl, *Louis Ferdinand*, 258; Thürheim, *Starhemberg*, 336; *Tagebücher*, 1:44.

²⁶ "Der Minister von [*sic*] Stein, der einige Tage hier war, ist der erste Staatsmann von Deutschland. Der sollte mir gewiss, wenn ich in Berlin lebte, nicht lange brach liegen." Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:250. See also J. R. Seeley, *Life and Times of Stein* (2 vols., Boston, 1879), 1:188. Seeley's work, after more than sixty years, remains one of the most useful in English on this period of German history. See also *Tagebücher*, 1:47; *Fortescue Manuscripts*, 9:459.

²⁷ Gentz left a day-by-day account of his activities at the Prussian headquarters, which for interest and significance stands among the finest memoirs in German literature. His journal was first published in England in the *United Service Journal* in 1836. It was then translated back into German and printed in *Minerva*. Schlesier reprinted the *Minerva* version in his edition of the *Schriften von Gentz*, 2:192–327. Schlesier also published the French original in his *Mémoires et lettres de Gentz*; it is likewise to be found

In his comments after the event Gentz pictured himself as a man of superb prevision, who saw that Prussia was toying with fate, and could have foretold the inevitable outcome. A month after Jena he wrote to Fasbender: "I could not for one minute approve of the principle of these undertakings; you know my old theory, that without a close union of the entire strength of Germany against the superior power of France absolutely nothing could be accomplished. . . . Nevertheless, once the decision was made, I considered it a duty, in accordance with my unalterable principles, to set aside all my old grievances against Prussia and to work tirelessly to create good will and trust in the cause, even though I myself could not share it."²⁸

This statement gives a true picture of what went on in the mind of the rational Gentz, but it overlooks another Gentz, a Gentz capable of more faith in the wonder-working powers of Providence than in his own all-too-human calculations. He afterward forgot the feeling of hopefulness and premature optimism that had led him to organize in detail his ideas on the German question and to relate them to the busy Haugwitz in their first extended conversation at headquarters. These ideas were based on the assumption that Prussia would emerge victorious from the conflict. If from the beginning Gentz had seriously believed that Prussia's doom was inevitable under the circumstances, why should he have raised the question of Germany's future at all? Why should he have talked seriously of the dissolution of Napoleon's *Rheinbund*; of a France pushed back to her original boundaries; of the foundation of two great German federations, "one under the protection of Austria, the other under the protection of Prussia"; of indemnification from Bavaria? Yet these were the questions that Gentz discussed — not confidently, perhaps, but at least hopefully — in his conversation with Haugwitz on October 5.²⁹

Gentz's optimism may be explained in part by the fact that he shared the commonly held illusion of the prowess of Prussia's military machine. His eyes began to be opened, however, when General Kalckreuth soon after his arrival informed him that the war could not succeed. By

in the *Fortescue Manuscripts*, volume 7. A fragment of forty-three pages is said to be in the still unpublished Gentziana among the papers of Arthur Paget. *Paget Papers*, 2:89; Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, 7:99; H. Hüffer, *Die Kabinettsregierung in Preussen und Johann Wilhelm Lombard* (Leipzig, 1891), 269. See also Friedrich Meusel, *Friedrich August Ludwig von der Marwitz* (2 vols. in 3, Berlin, 1908-13), 2:7, note; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 116-117.

²⁸ Jacubenz, "Gentz und Fasbender," in *Mitteilungen des kaiserlichen und königlichen Kriegsarchivs*, 7:82-84.

²⁹ Schlesier, *Mémoires et lettres de Gentz*, 248.

October 10 he was thoroughly disheartened and once more reiterated his old principle that "the single solitary means of re-establishing the equilibrium against France is to be found in a wisely concerted coordination of all the forces that remain in Europe"; and that the sine qua non of such an action was a close Austro-Prussian alliance.³⁰

Not until the third day after his arrival and after he had moved with headquarters from Naumburg to Erfurt was he informed of the reasons for the invitation to appear on the scene of war. The Prussian government, Haugwitz explained, wanted Gentz's advice and the service of his pen for a few days; it hoped that he would then undertake a mission to Vienna to tell what he had seen and thereby encourage the Austrian government to enter the conflict. The second proposal Gentz declined on the spot. He stated frankly that at no time since his removal to Vienna had he enjoyed the complete confidence of the Austrian government, and that he could accomplish as much by letter as in person. Gentz was actually on better terms with Stadion than he had been for some time, and to Count Goetzen, who possessed enough tact to be at once a member of the war party and a personal friend of Frederick William, he had relayed the encouraging news that Kaiser Franz and Stadion believed that the causes of Austria and Prussia were inseparable. By this statement, as Adair, the new British ambassador, learned after further questioning, Stadion meant that he was willing to enter "into some explanations with the British government in conjunction with Russia and Prussia" provided that "Prussia should be once fairly, and without the possibility of retreat, engaged in the contest with France."³¹

Prussia was now undeniably engaged in the contest, but Gentz, remembering Prussia's hesitations of the preceding year, turned a deaf ear to Haugwitz's insistence upon immediate aid from long-suffering Austria. He was embarrassed and even exasperated when Haugwitz returned, on October 7 and on October 9, with new pleas for the mission to Vienna. He finally declined even to write there, and replied with a

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 230, 314-320.

³¹ Schlesier, *Mémoires et lettres de Gentz*, 243-245, 250-251; Gentz to Goetzen, September 16, 1806, in Häusser, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 2:610-611, note; *Fortescue Manuscripts*, 9:459; Robert Adair, *Historical Memoir of a Mission to the Court of Vienna in 1806* (London, 1844), 135. Gentz's better relations with, and greater usefulness to, the court of Vienna are indicated in his letter to Johannes von Müller of September 20, 1806. Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:262, 264. Gentz's correspondence with Goetzen has long been known in manuscript. It was tapped years ago by Häusser, and more recently by Tschirch. I had hoped to examine it, but the Goetzen papers were in the process of transfer from the archives at Dahlem to the Kriegsarchiv at Potsdam and were inaccessible to investigators. By the end of August, 1806, Gentz was apparently in contact with Goetzen. Writing to Madame von Berg on August 26, he stated: "Do you know that Goetzen has arrived? Now all the mystery [?] is going to unfold." Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Autographa.

heated rebuttal when Haugwitz broached the possibility of forcing Austria to take sides. Gentz often resented the bland assumption by his countrymen that he should govern his conduct by the rule, "once a Prussian always a Prussian." He was in the service of Austria, the recipient of an Austrian salary. He had gone to Prussian headquarters at his own expense and at some risk to his position in Vienna. He rightly felt that it ill became him to act as the emissary of a foreign power to his own adopted court, or to write a letter to the Austrian government dated from Erfurt.³²

The tangible results of Gentz's journey to Prussian headquarters were therefore negligible. He touched up the language of Lombard's long-winded manifesto, which contained such a list of complaints extending back over the years that the reader was more likely to despise Prussia's past conduct than to admire her present foolhardy enterprise.³³ At the request of Haugwitz, Gentz also drafted a proclamation to the army. When Frederick William read the original he said: "Very pretty words, but *too genteel*; I should like the soldiers to understand it also." The manuscript went back to Gentz covered with corrections from the royal pencil. Haugwitz, greatly embarrassed, wanted Gentz to ignore most of the king's suggestions, but Gentz refused to have anything more to do with the matter. He suggested that Goetzen could finish the proclamation in good shape and still keep in the king's good graces.³⁴

On October 11 Gentz accompanied the high officials from Erfurt to Weimar. He found everything in a jumble, the town teeming with troops and harassed, worried generals. The Prussian defeat at Saalfeld had just taken place, and Gentz soon learned of the death on the battlefield of his idolized Louis Ferdinand, who fell a victim to exaggerated and misdirected bravery.³⁵ The next day he left the disorganized headquarters, and by October 17 was back in Dresden. Here he received the news of the final disaster of Jena.³⁶

³² Schlesier, *Mémoires et lettres de Gentz*, 268-271; 304-305.

³³ *Ibid.*, 251; Friedrich M. Kircheisen, *Napoleon I: Ein Lebensbild* (2 vols., Stuttgart and Berlin, 1927-29), 2:30; Häusser, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 2:627.

³⁴ Schlesier, *Mémoires et lettres de Gentz*, 287, 305-307.

³⁵ See the account of his experiences at headquarters which Gentz sent to Czartoryski on October 27, in Kipe, *Gentz a Polska*, 134-146.

³⁶ One incident of Gentz's stay at headquarters has a certain intrinsic interest, and deserves mention. On October 9 he was presented to the heroine of 1806, Queen Louise of Prussia. "She expressed herself," Gentz wrote, "with precision, with firmness, with energy, and at the same time with a moderation and a prudence that would have captivated me in a man." She defended herself against the charge of favoritism toward Russia and declared that her greatest hopes were pinned on the "closest possible union of everything that carried the name German." Schlesier, *Mémoires et lettres de Gentz*, 296-300.

10. After Jena

THE CONDITION of Prussia after Jena has provided more than one historian with an excuse to forget his inhibitions; and more than one historian has been tempted, when his vocabulary failed him, to search the dictionary for riotous words to describe the demoralization of the country. A small garrison at Colberg on the Baltic and a meager but active force in Silesia were all that remained of Prussia's military power west of the Vistula, and to the east of the river Frederick William mustered only twenty-five thousand men. The morale of the people left much to be desired. Humiliation could lead a Fichte, an Arndt, a Kleist, to seek for new wellsprings of national life, but the real humiliation of Jena remained a thing of the future. Jena was a humiliation that grew with the years: it was the Versailles of nineteenth-century German nationalism. Men did not forget Jena, because they were not allowed to forget it. It was seared into their consciousness by the unremitting efforts of propagandists who were determined that it should remain a burning memory.

The Jena of 1806 was another story. Goethe cultivated an attitude of Olympian detachment, and Hegel, glimpsing Napoleon on his way to battle, professed to see the *Weltgeist* concentrated in one individual astride a horse. The plain fact of the matter was that thousands of Germans did not know whether to be humiliated or captivated.

Actually, the hopelessness of the allied cause after Jena can easily be overdrawn. By Christmas Napoleon had placed himself in a dangerously exposed position. His army had advanced into Poland, occupying Warsaw, and to the north, in East Prussia, he faced not merely the negligible fragment of Frederick William's forces but Russia's imponderable strength, which heretofore had been merely a passive factor in the campaign. A sudden incursion by Austria would have seriously threatened the rear of Napoleon's army, and he himself appreciated that strategically his position was glaringly vulnerable. Psychologically, how-

ever, his position was superb; and it was the psychological factor that now determined the policy of the Vienna government. Against an ordinary mortal the reasons for war might have appeared overwhelming, but against the phenomenon of the *Weltgeist* on horseback they dwindled to insignificance. The Austrians, with pardonable caution, decided to do nothing.

Friedrich Gentz approved of this do-nothing policy. He had left Dresden on October 20, had stayed three weeks in Teplitz, the Bohemian resort, and had then settled in Prague. The affairs of the world and his personal situation filled him with gloom. Living on borrowed money, he was forced to make repeated appeals to Russia and to England for financial assistance, and on December 29 he was reduced to the point of asking Czartoryski for his support in founding a newspaper, in French or German, at Riga, Mitau, or Grodno.¹ This was not quite so bad as the banks of the Neva, but for a man who hated cold and the Russians it looked like the last resort.

A campaign of vilification against him in Germany, touched off by Napoleon himself, intensified Gentz's discomfiture. In a bulletin of October 27 Napoleon had said that anger against the instigators of the war was at its height; and the chief instigators he identified as Queen Louise, Louis Ferdinand, and the "*miserable scribe* named Gentz." Gentz was not even credited with acting in good faith, for the bulletin went on to castigate him as "one of these men without honor who sell themselves for gold." The German press, dutifully echoing the theme, disseminated all the information obtainable that could further besmirch the miserable scribe. Rumors spread that Gentz was marked for kidnapping, and his move from Teplitz to Prague was motivated by considerations of safety.²

It is not surprising that Gentz should have resented the way in which he was systematically stigmatized as a public enemy of Germany in the winter of 1806-07. There was no truth in the insinuation that he was largely responsible for Prussia's foolhardy course, although he had

¹ *Tagebücher*, 1:49; Kipe, *Gentz a Polska*, 145-147, 150; *Fortescue Manuscripts*, 9:478. According to Gentz's version, Frederick William III promised him one hundred louis d'or to cover his expenses. The trip cost him much more, and when he left Dresden he had to abandon a collection of eighty English books, which he never saw again. Because of the depleted condition of his own treasury, Frederick William could pay only fifty louis in 1806, and in 1811 Gentz tried to collect the rest. Gentz to Hardenberg, August 24, 1811, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 92, Hardenberg, K. 14.

² *Correspondance de Napoléon*, 13:424. Napoleon's proclamation of October 27 was duly published in the German press and may be seen, for example, in the issue of the *Berlinische Zeitung* for November 13, 1806. *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 88-89, 116.

done his share to encourage the nationalist fervor of the clique headed by Louis Ferdinand and Queen Louise. Under the circumstances he showed admirable restraint in the face of a situation in which he "could scarcely pick up a newspaper" without reading "diatribes" against himself.³ When finally he decided to slash out, he did so in a private letter to the most vulnerable target in Germany, Johannes von Müller.

Müller had been beset by few doubts with Jena fresh before his eyes. The choice between humiliation and captivation presented no difficulties. "I see that God has given [Napoleon] dominion over the world," he wrote soon after the battle; "never has that been clearer to me than in this war." When the die-hards fled Berlin, he stayed behind, and on November 20 was honored by an interview of an hour and a half with the Great Man himself. Müller's conversion was now complete. "I must say," said the susceptible bookworm, "that the diversity of his knowledge, the acuteness of his observations, the soundness of his intelligence, the breadth of his views, as well as his manner of conversing with me, filled me with affection for him. . . . Through his genius and his simple goodness [Napoleon] conquered me."⁴

Müller's conversion remained no secret. Letters to literary friends bore witness to his new allegiance, and on January 29, 1807, he delivered an academic address "on the glory of Frederick" in which he hailed Napoleon as the preserver of the Frederickian way. His observations undoubtedly contained much that was historically sound; Goethe gave the speech a favorable review and later translated it from the original French for publication in Cotta's *Morgenblatt*. But intimate friends who had known Müller in his anti-Napoleonic moods of a few months before were utterly disgusted by the whole business. "Such are the men," wrote Adam Müller scornfully, "who study history for the sake of great examples." Gentz, because of his previous intimacy with Johannes Müller had particularly good grounds for appreciating the extent of his shamelessness. Only a year before, Johannes had been so brash as to address him repeatedly with the intimate *Du* — a familiarity which no other correspondent save, occasionally, his beloved Adam Müller ever permitted himself — and had written such stuff as the following: "Brother, let there be an agreement between me and thee that we shall never *forsake each other*. Should Europe fall, let us go to Kazan, for England will not survive Europe, and America is a nation of businessmen. Or shall we go to the British empire on the Ganges,

³ Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:270.

⁴ Wittmer, "Ligne, Müller, Gentz, et l'Autriche," in *Annales Prince de Ligne*, 6:188-190.

where I believe many will seek refuge? Tell me what to do. I am ready for anything except to exist under the yoke of the destroyer of everything which is dear to me.”⁵

Gentz knew Johannes von Müller well enough to realize the extent to which the sentimental and the merely rhetorical entered into his impassioned outbursts. Never had Gentz regarded him as anything but a useful though unreliable ally; and cognizant of the fact that Müller was “the most faint-hearted of men,” and congenitally so, he was willing to be tolerantly indulgent. As far back as the beginning of the year 1806 Müller had showed signs of wavering in his support of the Good Cause. Gentz had complained, but had done nothing drastic.⁶ By February, 1807, however, goaded on by the praise of Müller in the German press in conjunction with its repeated denunciation of his own conduct, Gentz decided that the circumstances justified a forthright break with the slippery historian. On February 27, 1807, he sent him a blistering letter, which contained the following words: “The whole composition of your character represents a strange mis-cue on nature’s part resulting in a mind of extraordinary power joined to a soul of the very weakest sort. The multitude of striking ideas and of ingenious and frequently profound observations which have issued from your pen in the last twenty years appear to have been developed merely for others: nothing clings to you, nothing can take root in you. You have been and remain the plaything of every impression that accidentally comes your way. Always ready to recognize everything, to agree on the value of everything, to embrace everything, to connect yourself with everything that comes anywhere in your neighborhood, you are incapable of hating anything completely, or of devoting yourself to anything completely. Your life is a continual capitulation. If the devil appeared on earth in person, I should show him how to make an alliance with you in twenty-four hours. . . . Don’t think,” Gentz continued more gently, “that I have written this letter without the most lively sense of pain. May your heart, may the past, tell you whether or not I knew how to value your friendship. I feel, therefore, what it means to lose you. As a warrior in a holy cause I pronounce an inexorable judgment of damnation upon your criminal apostasy; as a man, as your former friend, I feel nothing but sympathy

⁵ Albert Leitzmann, “Goethe’s Beziehungen zu Johannes von Müller,” in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, 152 (1935):507–508; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:415–416; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:135; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 44.

⁶ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:269; 2:182, 281; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 39, 50; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:215–216; Gentz to Madame [?], Dresden, September 20, 1806, in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Autographa.

for you. To hate you is more than I am capable of doing. If God brings our hopes to realization and crowns with success my labors and the labors of others who believe as I do, you may expect just one single punishment, but it is all-important: order and rule by law will return; the robbers and the usurper will fall; Germany—free, happy, honored, governed by wise rulers—will bloom again!”⁷

In the face of this onslaught Johannes Müller sought to hide his shame behind the bloody robe of the martyr: he complained of the specious reasons for which “Calvin-Gentz” wished him “to feel the sweet heat which Servetus knew.” Repeatedly he climbed upon the pedestal of the higher morality, as when he remarked self-righteously that “the jingle of guineas, unknown to me, has something which makes one deaf to the thunder of Jena and Auerstadt.” And again, innocently lifting the veil for a moment: “Alas! the louis d’or are still as unknown to me as the guineas.” But it was not for long. One fine day came a summons to Fontainebleau, and Johannes Müller emerged a secretary of state in Jerome’s new kingdom of Westphalia. Clothed by these new dignities the pathetic Swiss scholar lived out his tormented life. In May, 1809, he died, and thus was spared the humiliation of witnessing the fall of the usurper and the regeneration of Germany.⁸

Before the close of February, 1807, as the letter to Müller reveals, Gentz was expressing hope for the future in language of real eloquence; and the comments of Müller leave the impression that Gentz had been quite “deaf to the thunder of Jena and Auerstadt.” Such was not the case. Gentz had been deeply depressed by the first results of the war and by their repercussions upon him personally. The unquestionable disfavor with which many Germans regarded him brought him all the usual woes of the prophet. Germany appeared to disown him, and Austria could not use him. Dependent upon borrowed money for his livelihood, he had appealed to Russia for financial aid, but his pleas remained unanswered. As for the celebrated guineas, their sweet tinkle was but a memory; for as Orders in Council clashed with the first pronouncements of Napoleon’s Continental system, England became suddenly remote. “We are now almost as much separated from England as from East India,” Gentz said sadly.⁹

⁷ Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:272–274.

⁸ Wittmer, “Ligne, Müller, Gentz, et l’Autriche,” in *Annales Prince de Ligne*, 6:200–201, 211–214; Leitzmann, “Goethe’s Beziehungen zu Müller,” in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, 152:509–510.

⁹ Jacubenz, “Gentz und Fasbender,” in *Mitteilungen des kaiserlichen und königlichen Kriegsarchivs*, 7:90–91.

In a letter of November 29, 1806, to Ompteda, the Hanoverian envoy at Dresden with whom Gentz had become intimate, he gave vent to the low spirits induced by the sorry plight of Europe and by his own prospects: "I am not easily discouraged, but a certain feeling in which I put more trust than in all my calculations has told me that the battle of Jena was the Last Judgment of Europe. It would be more than ridiculous even to think of the resurrection of Prussia. Austria will writhe several months more in the horrors of prolonged agony, and will fall next year with the leaves. . . . Adair is quite right in guaranteeing Siberia at most to [Russia]." In other letters Gentz bemoaned the failure of Russia and England to make peace immediately with Napoleon; and as for Austria, her days were numbered whatever she did.¹⁰

There are times when man needs solace, and for Friedrich Gentz this was such a time. Earlier in the year he had found comfort in religion. In Dresden, with Adam Müller daily at his side, religion had seemed vital and real, but when he moved to Prague, God had stayed behind in Dresden, and God in Dresden seemed as remote as Lord Grenville in England. Gentz turned elsewhere for solace and found it in the sprightly young Duchess of Acerenza. She was the third of four very sociable daughters of Peter Biron, the Duke of Courland, and in 1806 had attained the appealing age of twenty-three.

Gentz was no stranger to the Duke of Courland's lively daughters. His intimacy with them dated from the time when he began to frequent the resorts and great houses of Bohemia several years before, and in the summer of 1803 he had found the four girls worthy of the following description: "They are ill-mannered little wenches, who lack the first requisites for good society. . . . There is nothing aristocratic, nothing noble, about the whole tribe. . . . I will not mention the rest of the camp following, which is composed of vagabonds and whores from all over the world. . . . This whole Courland troupe has been more of a burden than a pleasure to me. They shouted and roared and swarmed around too much, and I have become too old and serious for such birds."¹¹

This passage is illustrative of Gentz's attitude toward women during the whole period following his journey to England in 1802. He frequented feminine society, but solely as a matter of job routine, conven-

¹⁰ *Politischer Nachlass des hannoverschen Staats- und Kabinets-Ministers Ludwig von Ompteda aus den Jahren 1804-1813*, edited by F. von Ompteda (3 vols., Jena, 1869) 1:211; Kipe, *Gentz a Polska*, 148-149; Jacubenz, "Gentz und Fasbender," in *Mitteilungen des kaiserlichen und königlichen Kriegsarchivs*, 7:87.

¹¹ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:141-142.

tion, or mere physical desire. In 1803 his name had been frequently linked with Madame von Eybenberg, a shapely, graceful, Christianized Jewess, who besides beauty possessed the rarer distinction of being an *unterrichtetes Frauenzimmer*. The widow of Prince Reuss, the former ambassador from Austria at Berlin, to whom she had been morganatically married, Madame von Eybenberg was widely reputed to have wed Gentz secretly in 1803, and as late as 1811 this was stated as a fact in the section of a genealogical handbook which dealt with the House of Reuss. Gentz repeatedly denied such rumors. "I am too wise, too temperate, too poor, too exacting on the one hand, too exhausted—and especially too indifferent toward the physical charms of women—on the other (much as that will surprise you), for the thought [of marriage] ever to rise in me again," he informed Brinckmann. This statement is substantiated by the word of Madame von Eybenberg herself: "Gentz comes to see me nearly every day," she wrote Goethe on December 10, 1803. "He tells me everything that interests him, trusts me, reads to me—but there is not the shadow of any inclination which could lead to such a catastrophe [as marriage]. I don't please him at all; it never even occurs to him that I am a woman." In the same connection the observation made by Louis Ferdinand in one of his last letters is not without pertinency. The prince, who made a fetish of love, informed his mistress, Pauline Wiesel, that Gentz's "mind and character show only two tendencies: First, there is the old anti-French tendency which breathes itself out in *mémoires*. Second, there is the social-fashionable tendency, which he satisfies in much the same way, since he hies himself to this or that woman from Vienna or Petersburg and pays visits. *Of love, of our kind of love*, he knows nothing!"¹²

True, Gentz knew little of love as experienced by Louis Ferdinand and Rahel. At the same time his relations with women during the past few years had not been limited to conscientious calls on ladies of reputed quality. He sighed sometimes for "the rejected sweetness of domestic happiness," and in 1804 formed a liaison with a certain Madame Swoboda; in 1805 she bore him a son who was named Joseph. Gentz eventually furnished the Madame with a house and livelihood, and his diaries for the rest of his life show that he was a frequent visitor at the Swoboda ménage. The city library at Vienna safeguards a sheaf of letters which Gentz wrote over the years to this woman, whom he describes in his diary as "a person of humble origin and very slight charm, who was

¹² Fürst, *Henriette Herz*, 143-147; *Tagebücher*, 1:27, 29; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:151 and note; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:104-105; Wahl, *Louis Ferdinand*, 382.

led by chance into my house." "I paid dearly," he continued ruefully, "for the pleasure which I found with her. Nevertheless she had luckily more good than bad qualities; and . . . I have treated her up to the present time [1826] with continued good will, although she never lived directly with me after 1809." The son, after his father's death, took the name of Joseph Gentz and achieved sufficient success to warrant the inclusion of his biography in the standard Austrian biographical dictionary. Proud of his distinguished parent, Joseph Gentz on two occasions published pamphlets in defense of his father's reputation.¹³

Gentz's own words and the comments of his contemporaries show that at forty-two he was a mature, somewhat cynical man of the world, who used women to stimulate his mind, to achieve his social ambitions, and upon occasion to satisfy his ordinary physical desires. He was scarcely a person to be swept off his feet by the flutter of a saucy petticoat, and his affair with that "ill-mannered little wench" Jeanne von Courland, Duchess of Acerenza, is almost unique in the long period of his life from 1803 to 1827. But swept off his feet he was in the winter of 1806-07. "In the month of December," he writes, "this passion mounted to a degree of wildness whose most remarkable features my original journal preserved in words of fire." In January, 1807, stern duty beckoned him to dip anew into politics and to remove himself for a week from the sweet oblivion of Prague. He returned to find "Wallmoden in possession," his own "foolishness properly rewarded."¹⁴

Gentz's re-entry into the political arena resulted from his gradual realization that Jena was not definitely "the Last Judgment of Europe." In near-by Silesia a Prussian army still held the field against the Bavarians and Württembergers whom Napoleon had charged with the subjugation of the province; and although the Prussian cause continued to receive setbacks between December 3, 1806, and January 5, 1807, the five fortified towns of Schweidnitz, Glatz, Silberberg, Neisse, and Cosel remained in the possession of Frederick William's forces. These towns dominated the region directly to the north of Bohemia and Moravia. The Prince of Anhalt-Plesse, who had been appointed governor general of Silesia, proved feeble and irresolute, but the king's aide-de-camp, Count Goetzen, moved heaven and earth to save a few precious morsels of Prussian territory from the onrush of the enemy.¹⁵

¹³ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:193; *Tagebücher*, 1:35. See also Joseph Gentz, *Über die Tagebücher von Fr. v. Gentz und gegen Varnhagen's Nachwort* (Vienna, 1861); Joseph Gentz, *Friedrich Gentz und die heutige Politik* (Vienna, 1861).

¹⁴ *Tagebücher*, 1:49-51.

¹⁵ Häusser, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:74-77; Kircheisen, *Napoleon*, 2:50.

In December Goetzen had attempted to go to Vienna to urge the Austrian government to occupy the Silesian fortresses, a project that was enthusiastically seconded by diplomatic representations from England and Russia. At Vienna, however, the counsels of cautious Archduke Carl prevailed over those of the more venturesome Stadion; and Goetzen was refused permission to cross the border for fear of offending Napoleon.¹⁶ Undiscouraged, Goetzen next sought to influence the Austrian government through Friedrich Gentz. When he invited the lovelorn nationalist to talk over the situation, Gentz felt he could not refuse. Having obtained the sanction of the police, Gentz left Prague on January 10, conferred with Goetzen at Nachod, and was back in Prague on January 17. As a result of the conversations Gentz agreed to make definite recommendations to Stadion, which he embodied in a communication of January 16. Picturing the condition of Prussia in the blackest terms, Gentz stressed the military danger in which Austria would be placed were Silesia to fall completely into the hands of the French. The wisest course, he argued, was for Austria to combine a public declaration of her continued neutrality with an immediate occupation of the Silesian fortresses. This action, he declared, would not be incompatible with Austria's position as a neutral, although under the circumstances its legality seemed to him of secondary importance. The crucial question was whether Napoleon would let Austria get away with such a coup. Gentz thought he would, for the stronger Austria made herself the less likely he would be to attack her.¹⁷

The moment was well chosen to move the Vienna government to act. At Pultusk and Golymin, in the last days of December, the French had encountered the first real resistance of the campaign. The British ambassador, Adair, was encouraged to observe that "a considerable change appears to have taken place in the dispositions of Austria." Pozzo, acting for Russia, had received from "the leading person in the emperor's military councils . . . assurances of the *possibility* of cooperation."¹⁸ Nevertheless it needed more than a memoir from Gentz to bring to a decision the cautious directors of Austrian policy. The arguments of Adair, of Pozzo, of Gentz, were listened to sympathetically

¹⁶ Häusser, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:91; Fournier, *Studien und Skizzen*, 2:131-134; Adair, *Mission to the Court of Vienna*, 168; Butterfield, *Peace Tactics of Napoleon*, 121.

¹⁷ Fournier, *Studien und Skizzen*, 2:134-155; Ompteda, *Nachlass von Ompteda*, 1:236, 242; *Tagebücher*, 1:51; Gentz to Hardenberg, "Substance d'un rapport fait au Comte Stadion au chateau de Nachod en Bohême le 16. janvier, 1807," G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 92, Hardenberg, L.15.

¹⁸ Adair to Charles Stuart, January 15, 1807, in the De Coppet collection, New York. See also Adair, *Mission to the Court of Vienna*, 103-104, 172, 186, 189, 206.

and then dismissed. Gentz could chalk up another failure in his attempt to sway the political course pursued at Vienna.

In St. Petersburg and London, however, Gentz's activities were known, and they were appreciated. Czartoryski, who for a time had seemed deaf to the Gentzian pleas, had actually been favorably disposed both toward Gentz's request for money and toward his proposal to found a French or German language newspaper in Russia under the czar's protection. Czartoryski not only laid Gentz's case before Alexander, but contributed an interesting suggestion of his own. "M. Gentz," he declared, "would also be the man best fitted to establish and direct a school designed as a *diplomatic nursery*, where young men on leaving the universities would carry on practical studies in international law, and would train themselves in the knowledge of men and of nations, in the discussion of public affairs, and in diplomatic style. The sudden changes in Europe make such a school more urgent every day." The czar did not authorize either the foundation of the newspaper or the diplomatic nursery, but through Czartoryski Gentz soon received "somewhat unexpectedly" a welcome five hundred ducats and a ring worth four hundred more. Through the efforts of Adair, who valued "his patriotism and his zeal," he also received five hundred pounds from the English government late in the winter, and in June the English put another five hundred pounds at his disposal. His immediate debts, which in March had made necessary the sale of a portion of his library in Vienna, were thus relieved, and Gentz was enabled to secure horses again, a carriage, and a cook, and to spend the summer in style among the fine people at Teplitz.¹⁹

The great event of the summer of 1807 was the famous Peace of Tilsit, which was signed in July, and which brought the war between France, Prussia, and Russia to an end. The Peace of Tilsit dropped the curtain on a melodrama that had divided itself naturally into three acts during the year. The first scenes had been martial in setting. Masses of men from France, Germany, Poland, Russia, dragged cannon, lashed horses, trudged, hungry and weary, back and forth across the plain of East Prussia. The first act ended on February 8, when the French charged through blinding snow, but in vain, against the Russians at Eylau, and Napoleon learned for the first time what it meant to fail in a pitched battle. The curtain again went up to reveal a scene but little changed. Now, however, the flat Prussian landscape was fresh and

¹⁹ Kipe, *Gentz a Polska*, 151-152; *Tagebücher*, 1:51-52; Adair, *Mission to the Court of Vienna*, 472; Jacubenz, "Gentz und Fasbender," in *Mitteilungen des kaiserlichen und königlichen Kriegsarchivs*, 7:98.

green as the French armies marched through the countryside. Once more Napoleon found himself at Eylau, but this time his attention focused upon near-by Friedland, where Marshall Lannes hotly engaged the Russian host. Napoleon ordered up the *gros* of his army, and when the sun had gone down on June 14 he heralded the achievement of a new Marengo, a new Austerlitz, a new Jena. In the final act the masses of armed men with stacked muskets, burnished buttons, and polished sabers, formed the background. A raft in the River Niemen held the center of the stage, and Europe gasped to see the emperor of the East clasp the hand of the emperor of the West, while Frederick William stood despondent in the rain.

In the weeks that immediately followed Eylau, Austria lost its great chance. "Oh, if only I were the Archduke Carl!" exclaimed Jomini. Napoleon himself later admitted that a well-timed Austrian offensive in the rear would probably have brought disaster to the French army.²⁰ The spell cast by Austerlitz and Jena remained effective in Vienna, however. Even the vigorous Stadion was content to rattle the sword a bit and to offer the mediation of his government in negotiations preliminary to a general peace. Friedrich Gentz, more daring and less impressed by the invincibility of Napoleon, chafed at what he considered Austria's undue caution. To Fasbender he wrote on March 10: "The present moment is decisive. Will Austria let her opportunity slip by without exploiting it at all? If Austria is really determined not to take up the sword immediately for the general cause of Germany and Europe, will she not at least do something *for herself* and *thereby* for the rest? Will she not at last transform her neutrality, which up to this time has been *passive*, into an *active* neutrality, and take possession of those places which are necessary for her safety, independence, and existence, and which are of obvious importance if her dignity and prestige are to be maintained? . . . Will she not place herself between France and Russia as a real mediator, which is to say as an imposing umpire?"²¹

In April Austria did indeed offer her services, but the figure she cut was scarcely that of an imposing umpire, for Austria's mood at the time was one of weakness and equivocation. Gentz's experience with the Goetzen negotiation had given him insight into Austrian policy, and his observations of Austria's conduct after Eylau confirmed his opinion that any Russian or Prussian hopes that were built on the like-

²⁰ Butterfield, *Peace Tactics of Napoleon*, 66-67.

²¹ Jacubenz, "Gentz und Fasbender," in *Mitteilungen des kaiserlichen und königlichen Kriegsarchivs*, 7:95.

lihood of Austrian entrance into the war would prove illusory: "Without Austria's entrance no salvation; in place of Austria's entrance no substitute; for Austria's entrance no hope." In these three sentences," he informed Ompteda on June 9, "is contained the essence of all my political calculations."²²

Once sure of his ground, Gentz did not stop with sharing his views with a few intimate friends. In the latter part of April he had laid before the Russian cabinet an important memoir "concerning the aim of the present war and the measures to be taken by Russia to bring it to an end." Basing the argument on his familiar thesis that no coalition that lacked Austria's full cooperation could defeat France, he advised Russia either to attempt to force Austria into the struggle by *threatening* "to share with France what no one wished to defend"; or, all threats failing, to make peace as soon as possible. "This is the first time," Gentz wrote in an explanatory letter to Czartoryski, "that I find myself in the situation of voting positively for a peace which is baneful, odious, and revolting according to my own conviction. Never were the results of my calculations more opposed to my sentiments. I advise what I abhor." He added these explanatory words: "If today I vote for an armistice, it is in the hope that it will suggest to us the means of returning more vigorously to our true course, and of combating under more favorable auspices the enemy of liberty, and of Europe."²³

It is obvious that Gentz, in advising the immediate negotiation of peace, had no such terms in mind as those that emerged from Tilsit. To Ompteda, who had read the memoir, he wrote: "You will judge whether M. de Rasumovsky is right when he reproaches me with having weakened since the battle of Jena."²⁴ And in the memoir itself he had carefully separated the threat of sharing with France "what no one wished to defend" as a *possible* means of drawing Austria into the coalition from the move for peace, which Russia was more likely to choose. Tilsit, which ironically linked the two courses, was a phenomenon seemingly wrought of the devil. Before Tilsit Gentz stood aghast. "Yes, everything is now over," he wrote. "Even the most awful of all the outcomes, which frequently haunted me in my sad reflections during the past four or five years, even that partition of Europe between two co-

²² Kipe, *Gentz a Polska*, 152-158; Ompteda, *Nachlass von Ompteda*, 1:300. See also Gentz to Goetzen, April 24, 1807, in Häusser, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:94.

²³ The memoir is summarized in F. Martens, *Recueil des traités et conventions conclus par la Russie avec les puissances étrangères* (14 vols., St. Petersburg, 1874-1905), 6:419; Kipe, *Gentz a Polska*, 158-159.

²⁴ Ompteda, *Nachlass von Ompteda*, 1:286-287.

lossal powers — which I have long predicted — appears, though sooner than I believed it possible, to be springing to fruition out of the ruins of all freedom and welfare.”²⁵

Gentz sank into pardonable lassitude. Stadion, now prepared to have no foreign policy at all, “save that of seeking favor with France,” warned the Bohemian police that “in certain critical junctures,” Gentz might compromise the government, “although his views and principles are in no sense dangerous to us. It is therefore necessary,” he continued, “for Gentz to be subjected to constant, though not disquieting, observation.” Word accordingly went out to the congenitally overzealous local worthies that the police should serve as Gentz’s guardians and “not treat him as a suspicious person.”²⁶ It is apparent that the police had little to worry about. He moved from Teplitz to Karlsbad, and back to Prague again in the fall, absorbed the whole time by the “endless pleasures and frivolities” of the world of fashion. “With the first days of July,” he wrote Brinckmann on October 16, 1807, “my political activity . . . ceased. Since that time I have become a privileged loafer.”²⁷

At Teplitz and Karlsbad, disporting under the summer sun with gay companions, Gentz had been able to keep gnawing discontent at a distance. But at Prague the incessant fog and rain of early winter, while he tried to occupy himself with reading and writing, brought devils of melancholy chasing about his rooms. “There squats brooding over my whole life a something which I can only describe accurately to you by the English word *gloom*,” he confided to Adam Müller on November 23. A week later his dejection had increased. “What I have felt and suffered during the last few weeks,” he wrote, “bears so little relation to the effect the public calamities have had upon me, that I must reach for entirely new modes of expression to make you understand what I mean.” As the winter progressed, however, the vigorous policy of an England with a Canning at the helm brought some cheer. “This winter will not last forever,” he remembered, “and for the summer new plans and hopes may well in me. If no one on the Continent can, will, or dare use me, I may be able to render England (and thereby indirectly Europe also) a few services with what is left of my ability. If

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 306–307. Herbert Butterfield, with brilliant insight, has described the process whereby in the course of two months Alexander came to accept not merely the idea of immediate peace, but also the idea of “sharing with France what no one wished to defend.” *Peace Tactics of Napoleon*, bk. 3, ch. 3.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 313; Fournier, *Studien und Skizzen*, 2:156–158; Kipč, *Gentz a Polska*, 114.

²⁷ *Tagebücher*, 1:52; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:287; Ompteda, *Nachlass von Ompteda*, 1:315–317, 331–333.

some great change does not happen this winter, it may very well be the last one that I shall spend upon the Continent.”²⁸

The changes that were taking place offered little encouragement for another Continental winter. By the early part of 1808 England's isolation was complete. Russia had declared war on England, and Prussia and Austria had severed diplomatic relations with the London government. In spite of these developments, Gentz managed to continue his connections not only with England, but with Russia and Austria as well. He was in a position to be of real aid to Britain; and Canning, more mindful of the Continent than most English foreign ministers, knew how to appreciate his endeavors. A memoir of early January, 1808, upon which Gentz had labored for nearly a month, was favorably received and, reinforced by a plea to Canning, resulted in the reopening of “a considerable credit in England,” which freed Gentz “all at once of all pressing cares.”²⁹

This fortunate turn of events enabled Gentz to settle comfortably in Teplitz for the summer without being plagued by financial worries. The high point of the season was a visit from Madame de Staël, who was traveling with her usual menagerie, consisting at this time of the faithful August William Schlegel and the Swiss scholar Sismondi. Madame de Staël, who had been to Vienna to place her son in the military college, had heard such praise of Gentz that she looked forward with keen anticipation to meeting him at Prague. Her disappointment was acute when, having arrived at the Bohemian capital, she learned that Gentz had left that very day for Teplitz. “Imagine my bad luck! Gentz left this evening for Teplitz,” she informed her confidant, Moritz O'Donnel. “It would have suited me much better to see him here, and I have especial need of a new stimulus to raise my spirits. So many disappointments like this have overtaken me since I left you that I see nothing more to hope for in life!” Allowing for some bathos in this statement, it is still clear that Madame de Staël expected a great deal from her German comrade in Napoleon-hating, for without further ado she hastened on to Teplitz.³⁰

Gentz likewise was favorably disposed, sight unseen, toward the

²⁸ *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 118-121; Jacubenz, “Gentz und Fasbender,” in *Mitteilungen des kaiserlichen und königlichen Kriegsarchivs*, 7:100; Ompteda, *Nachlass von Ompteda*, 1:334-341.

²⁹ Stern, “Briefe von Gentz,” in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 21:143-145; Ompteda, *Nachlass von Ompteda*, 1:341-342, 350; *Tagebücher*, 1:53.

³⁰ Jean Mistler, *Madame de Staël et Maurice O'Donnell, 1805-1817* (Paris, 1926), 144-145.

volcanic lady. A propos of her latest book, *Corinne*, he had written the preceding July to Adam Müller: "In the *Corinne* are a few delightful passages; but as a whole it is a poor book. . . . Just the same there is something about the Madame which attracts me greatly. This continually gloomy, doleful remorse regarding the past, especially with respect to dead people, is, as you know, a characteristic trait of my temperament; and I have never found that trait so completely in anyone else as in the De Staël. Hence I have always been convinced that if we ever met we should be great friends."³¹

On May 28 the two finally came together at Teplitz and passed seven hours in lively conversation. The next day both sat down to confide their impressions to a confidant — Madame de Staël to Moritz O'Donnell, and Gentz to Adam Müller. Wrote Madame de Staël: "The rapidity of [Gentz's] French wearied me. It strikes me that he intended thereby to avoid appearing awkward. . . . He is without doubt a man with a great deal of *esprit* and he possesses a very great deal of knowledge, . . . but his character appears to me to have an artificial firmness. . . . He is not naturally vivacious or elegant, but he has cultivated these qualities in such a way that his personality must suffer. One result of this is that he does not understand what one says to him, and he rushes along in conversation like a torrent of sand. In spite of all these observations I regard him as a man of the first rank among men of letters, and I am grateful to him for his knowledge of politics and for his interest in politics. . . . But are not all men ridiculous in some respects?"³²

These remarks speak for themselves. From his own account it is manifest that Gentz was innocently unaware of the amount of caustic amusement Madame de Staël mixed with her respect for him. Skilled veteran that she was, she gave no hint that she liked the sound of her own voice as well and probably better than that of the voluble patriot. Instead, she artfully allowed Gentz to become "intoxicated by her clever flatteries, which finally," so he himself informs us, "took on a really passionate character." "I tell you straight out," he wrote Adam Müller, "she charmed me. I have never met with such universality and depth of mind, with such ease, versatility, good-heartedness, and grace in conversation. . . . I feared the lightning thrusts and sallies of her wit. . . . On the contrary I have found her extraordinarily fluent, clear, to the point, logical, coherent, easy to talk to, as no other woman in the world. It seems as though one could discuss matters with her forever."³³

³¹ *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 107.

³² Mistler, *Madame de Staël et O'Donnell*, 149-150.

³³ *Tagebücher*, 1:53-54; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 139, 144-145.

When Madame de Staël continued her journey to Dresden, Gentz was overcome with a feeling of desolation. He had tried to crowd what could not be said in eternity into a few short hours, and he was determined if possible to devise some scheme to prolong the delectable intercourse. He hit upon the idea of a secret meeting at the town of Pirna near Dresden and laid the matter before her in an artfully worded letter. "I saw you for twenty-four hours, but the feeling which I have experienced since your departure would appear to belong to a liaison of many years." Madame's conversation, he declared, surpassed her books, but her soul surpassed even her conversation; and he longed to see her *tout de suite* in Pirna. "You can never imagine how my heart has beat while I have been writing this letter," he concluded. This little adventure struck Madame de Staël's fancy, and she and Gentz did arrange a *rendezvous* at Pirna.³⁴

There is no evidence that any considerable political consequence should be attached to Gentz's encounter with Madame de Staël. Gentz himself, perhaps with a certain disingenuousness, cast a romantic light about the whole affair. The Austrian and the French governments, however, through their watchful secret agents, saw the spinning of a significant intrigue. Gentz's unwavering fidelity to his old political sentiments was widely known, and Napoleon had been informed that the miserable scribe continued his nefarious connections with the *émigrés* and with England. When the report came in that "the universal woman" had taken up with Gentz, Napoleon considered the news of real importance. To Fouché he wrote on June 28: "Madame de Staël has been carrying on a correspondence *avec le nommé Gentz* and has got herself mixed up with the clique of London mischief-makers. . . . This liaison with this individual [Gentz] can only be harmful to France. You will make known that up to this moment we have looked upon her merely as foolish, but that now she is beginning to enter a coterie which is detrimental to the public tranquillity. I have likewise directed the minister for foreign affairs to make this known to all my agents at foreign courts, and to have her watched at all the places which she visits." The Austrian police were similarly on the lookout, but nothing came of all this vigilant surveillance.³⁵

Gentz, in reality, was spending an unusually quiet summer in Tep-
litz. He continued to cultivate the society folk with businesslike regu-

³⁴ Gentz to Madame de Staël, May 31, 1808, in the British Museum, Eg. 2385, f. 4.

³⁵ Kipč, *Gentz a Polska*, 160; Ompteda, *Nachlass von Ompteda*, 2:219-220; Mistler, *Madame de Staël et O'Donnell*, 153 and note; *Lettres inédites de Napoléon I^{er}*, edited by Léon Lecestre (2 vols., Paris, 1897), 1:210.

larity, but he found considerable time for study. He was gathering material for a work on maritime law, and he laboriously waded through a number of weighty tomes in Latin, which he went to a good deal of trouble to procure. The results of this scholarly work took the form of two memoirs with a decidedly pro-English slant, which he finally composed four years later. In addition he kept a weather eye on everything political that issued from the presses of Germany. Most of these products filled him with dismay; he was moved to chide the editor of the *Nürnberger Correspondenten* for fostering the legend that he, Gentz, had been one of those chiefly responsible for the disaster of 1806. One book, however, roused his hopes for the future of political writing in Germany; this was Fichte's famous *Reden an die deutsche Nation*. His comment is particularly interesting. "I have read with boundless pleasure . . . the *Reden* of Fichte," he informed Adam Müller. "Nothing I have read for a long time has so surprised me. . . . Almost no one has ever spoken so magnificently, so profoundly, so proudly of the German nation."³⁶

While Gentz lingered at Teplitz into the late summer, pleasantly occupied with his friends and his books, cumulative evidence indicated that the tide was turning once more against Napoleon, and that his forthright opponents might soon have occasion to go into action again. In August came the news, which Gentz received at first incredulously, then joyfully, of the disasters overtaking the French armies in Spain. In the early autumn Napoleon and Alexander met at Erfurt to re-enact the lovefest of Tilsit; but though the Franco-Russian alliance ostensibly survived, the relations between the two monarchs had cooled, and Metternich confidently reported that Austria need not fear aggression from Russia.³⁷ Stadion redoubled his efforts to put Austria on a war footing. Save in Hungary, every able-bodied man between the ages of eighteen and forty-five was called into the militia, and a wave of enthusiasm swept through all classes of the population. Simultaneously in Prussia similar measures were inaugurated under the vigorous leadership of Stein, Scharnhorst, and Gneisenau: "Their plans looked to the

³⁶ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:298-302; C. F. Seebode, "Ungedrucktes Schreiben Friedrichs von Gentz an den Redacteur des Nürnberger Korrespondenten," in *Schmidt's Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 1 (1844):290-302; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:326-331, 333-335, 338; John Holland Rose, "The Napoleonic Empire at Its Height," in *The Cambridge Modern History*, 9:326; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 148. See also H. C. Engelbrecht, *Johann Gottlieb Fichte: A Study of His Political Writings with Special Reference to His Nationalism* (New York, 1933), 11, 132, where the reader may find a complete distortion, in summary, of J. H. Rose's interpretation of Fichte.

³⁷ *Tagebücher*, 1:55; H. du Coudray, *Metternich* (New Haven, 1936), 51.

arming of the nation — a levy en masse — and the immediate conclusion of an alliance with Austria.”³⁸ The union of the German nation in opposition to Napoleon, for which Gentz so long had labored and sighed, appeared on the road to realization.

By 1808, however, sad experience had taught Gentz caution. At first he distrusted Austrian leadership and feared that once again war would be precipitated before adequate diplomatic arrangements had been made. His former associate, Goetzen, had been authorized by the Berlin government to take up the congenial task of preparing the ground for close military cooperation with Austria, and Gentz felt obliged to let Goetzen know that his agents by trying to work too fast were harming the cause.³⁹ But by September, the good news from Spain having been confirmed, he was again ready for adventurous activity. A letter from Stadion exhilarated him beyond words. Breathing a spirit of friendship and trust, Stadion’s letter gave credible assurances that Gentz would soon be called upon to throw himself “heart and soul” into a task worthy of his most strenuous exertions. “It is clear,” Gentz informed the faithful Ompteda on September 4, “that luck is leaving Bonaparte and that his frightful career has reached its zenith. Europe can be saved through Spain, if Europe still has the determination and the courage to save itself.”⁴⁰ He returned to Prague, rented a fine dwelling in the house of Count Kolowrat, and settled down to wait comfortably for the blare of the war trumpets.

³⁸ Guy Stanton Ford, *Stein and the Era of Reform in Prussia* (Princeton, 1922), 147.

³⁹ Gentz to Canning, June 15, 1808, in Stern, “Briefe von Gentz,” in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für oesterreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 21:150; Gerhard Ritter, *Stein: Eine politische Biographie* (2 vols., Stuttgart and Berlin, 1931), 2:68–78, 353.

⁴⁰ Ompteda, *Nachlass von Ompteda*, 1:398–400; *Tagebücher*, 1:55.

II. The War of 1809

FOR ABOUT a decade Gentz had occupied himself with two great problems which provided abundant scope for his talent as a publicist and as an adviser of governments. The first problem was how to make war national and popular. The cause must command the wholehearted enthusiasm of the German people, Gentz was convinced, if there was to be hope for success against Napoleon. By the end of 1808 a wave of martial enthusiasm was sweeping through all the lands where German was spoken, and Gentz had done his part to inspire it. He had earned even the personal condemnation of the French emperor, in token of which he could display proudly the epithet "miserable scribe."

The second problem was equally important, and if anything more difficult; namely, how to bring all the German states, and particularly Austria and Prussia, into a common diplomatic and military front. Gentz's activities as an adviser to governments had been directed primarily toward the achievement of such a Berlin-Vienna axis. Up to a certain point in the year 1808 everything appeared to be leading toward an effective Austro-Prussian *rapprochement* backed by an enthusiastically aroused public opinion. Gentz had good reason to believe that the "frightful career" of Napoleon had reached its zenith; but he was quite wrong in supposing that fortune had deserted him. On September 2 an intercepted letter from the Freiherr vom Stein fell under the eyes of Napoleon; it gave positive proof that the ultimate aim of Stein's labors was "a national revival, which should in due course lead to the expulsion" of the French from Prussian and German soil.¹

Napoleon knew how to utilize to the full this windfall. He immediately forced Frederick William III to ratify a harsh and humiliating treaty that stringently limited the military and diplomatic effectiveness of Prussia; he demanded Stein's resignation on November 24; and on December 16 he issued "a decree of exile and outlawry" which drove

¹ Rose, "Napoleonic Empire," in *The Cambridge Modern History*, 9:335.

"*le nommé Stein*" to seek refuge in Prague by the side of "*le nommé Gentz*." The Berlin-Vienna axis again became an elusive goal.

It was fortunate for Gentz that the "vigorous-souled" Stein decided to settle first of all in Prague. The indomitable stoicism with which the great statesman faced every misfortune provided a helpful object lesson for the more volatile publicist. Gentz had ample opportunity to benefit from the presence of this man, whom all patriots recognized as the "patriarch, the supreme head of their church," for the two met daily for lengthy conversations during January and February of 1809.²

Meanwhile the Vienna government had decided on war, with Prussia or without Prussia. The atmosphere of the country was charged with electric expectancy; the Austrians felt proud and confident and entertained great hopes for the future. Encouraged by the events in Spain, assured of aid from England, fairly confident of neutrality from Russia, Austria, relying mainly on her own resources, girded her loins to combat Napoleon. Until the last she did not despair completely of Prussian help, for the ambassador at the Hohenzollern court wrote encouragingly that "the opinion of the country, and in particular that of the army, is all for waging war."³

Late in February Gentz received his eagerly awaited summons to Vienna. "The greatest of all epochs draws nigh," he wrote to Adam Müller on the day of his departure from Prague. "Joy and dismay, hope and fear, clash most strangely within me. To think that in a few days I shall be in Vienna! To think that there everything will come into perspective and that in the first twenty-four hours both present and future will stand clearly before my eyes! . . . My fate is entirely dependent . . . upon the results of the next six or eight weeks. I have experienced and survived more than one of these crises. . . . But measured beside the weight of the present hour all previous crises appear to me light as a feather."⁴ Again Gentz's emotions allowed joy and hope to well within him; but in the recesses of his mind the cold calculations of his reason inspired dismay and fear over the dangers of a war against Napoleon without the aid of Prussia and the rest of Germany.

The memoir that he carried with him from Prague and handed to Stadion upon his arrival in Vienna expressed his reasoned caution, as well as his hopes for the far-reaching results to be expected from a successfully prosecuted war. He had composed the work several weeks

² *Tagebücher*, 1:59, 110; Max Lehmann, *Freiherr vom Stein* (3 vols., Leipzig, 1921), 3:357.

³ Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, 7:345.

⁴ *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 156-157.

before, and it is of sufficient interest to be summarized in some detail. After reviewing the situation in Europe he declared that the moment was ripe for action. The diplomats must first do some necessary spadework, however, particularly at the courts of Prussia and Saxony. Once these states were brought into a common front with Austria, and once it was announced in firm and stirring tones that the coalition proposed to free Germany from the tyranny of France, public opinion would sweep the lesser courts into a crusade of truly popular and national scope. He asserted more emphatically than ever that active aid from Russia was neither necessary nor particularly desirable: sad experience had shown what misfortunes attended Russian "support." The purpose of the war would be to create in central Europe a Germany strong enough to preserve the balance between the potentially aggressive states of France and Russia. That meant a new constitution for Germany, and on this subject Gentz had definite ideas. First, in his opinion, the imperial title should be restored to the Habsburgs. Second, though the various states should be allowed complete domestic self-government, their control over foreign policy should be severely limited, and there should be but one army for the whole empire. Third, there should be a confederate congress, which might pass proposals from the Austrian commissioner by a simple majority, and proposals from the other delegates by a two-thirds' majority. Fourth, constitutional changes should require unanimous consent; and, fifth, machinery should be set up to arbitrate between the various states. "The independence of Germany," he concluded, "is Europe's primary political need and conforms to the supreme best interest of Europe as a whole. . . . It is certain that if the much promised *eternal peace* should ever cease to be a shadow picture, it must be brought to mankind by this road and by this road alone."⁵

For reasons beyond his control Stadion was unable to shape Austrian policy as Gentz recommended. A Prussian alliance was not to be gained in 1809; but with Prussia or without Prussia, Austria was determined to fight. "The decision has been made to escape from the previously desperate situation by a mighty exertion of all forces. Austria will not lay down arms until a decisive result has been achieved. I regard this decision . . . as beyond recall."⁶ With these words, a few days after his arrival in Vienna, Gentz gave Stein an up-to-the-minute idea of what to expect in the immediate future.

⁵ *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 2:104-158; Ritter, *Stein*, 2:354.

⁶ Stein, *Briefwechsel*, 3:49.

In reality, Austria's plight in 1809 did not differ greatly from her plight in 1805, when Gentz had waxed so critical of Cobenzl's policy. To be sure, the present war was "desired by the government, by the army, and by the people," whereas the hostilities of 1805 had been, strictly speaking, a government enterprise.⁷ Napoleon, furthermore, was supposed now to be materially weakened by his setbacks in Spain. But again, as in 1805, Austria had failed to secure beforehand the Prussian alliance, which Gentz, in his coldly rational moods, regarded as indispensable. And her position was the more vulnerable because the most she could now expect from St. Petersburg was benevolent neutrality, whereas in 1805 Russia had fought on Austria's side. Nevertheless, though it was easy to demonstrate that Austria's present position was perhaps worse than it had been four years earlier, Gentz did not resume the critical tactics that had characterized his relations with the Cobenzl government. The personal element apparently determined his attitude: he distrusted Cobenzl; Stadion commanded his admiration and his loyalty. Nor did Gentz, when the war ended in defeat for Austria, launch into recriminations against Stadion for disregarding his advice to negotiate beforehand an alliance with Prussia and Saxony. His sharp words were directed instead against "the actual originator of all previous misfortune," the hapless Archduke Carl, who once again had been entrusted with the direction of Austria's military forces. To Gentz, in the role which he was least qualified to fill but which he insisted upon playing repeatedly—that of military critic—Archduke Carl had been, as always, "a thoroughly bad general." "With Archduke Carl in control, I should never have begun the war," he declared on August 11.⁸ Better qualified judges, it must be added, have not heaped laurels on the Archduke Carl of 1809.

By August 11 the fighting was over. Gentz had composed a stirring manifesto, and Heinrich von Kleist had been inspired to write some of the fiercest hymns of hate ever produced by any war. But they did not win battles. The campaign had opened around Regensburg in April with a series of French victories which cleared the Danube valley; and on May 13 Napoleon entered Vienna. On May 21 and 22 the French crossed the river and were fought to a standstill by the Austrians at Aspern. There followed a pause of several weeks, but on July 5 and 6

⁷ Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, 7:349.

⁸ August Fournier, "Gentz und der Friede von Schoenbrunn," in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, 144:234, 240 ff. See also the letter of Prince de Ligne to Gentz, February 20, 1806, in which Gentz is chided for his propensity to make snap military judgments. *Annales Prince de Ligne*, 1:283-284.

the fighting was resumed at near-by Wagram. This time, after a bitter struggle, the French emerged victorious, and on July 12 the Austrians signed the armistice that brought actual hostilities to a close.

The campaign of 1809 made a tremendous impression on Gentz, who fled first to Budapest and finally to Dotis, where he kept in constant touch with the leading civil and military authorities. By the middle of July the inner circle had divided into two factions: one wanted to continue the war, the other to conclude peace as soon as possible. "It is always the women, the *abbés*, and the idlers of a city who wish war," the Prince de Ligne liked to say.⁹ In the Austrian war party of 1809 were to be found Empress Maria Ludovica, her confidant, Ferdinand Palffy, the influential *Staatsrat* Baldacci, and Stadion, for whom the war had become a matter of honor, since he was no longer enthusiastic about it. Until late in September this war faction enjoyed the ascendancy over Emperor Francis, who, furious when Archduke Carl on his own responsibility accepted the armistice terms of July 12, had replaced the archduke with Prince Johann Liechtenstein.

The peace party comprised most of the important Austrian generals. Since his return to Vienna in February, Gentz had become intimate with this military crowd — with Johann Liechtenstein, General Grünne, and particularly with General Bubna, who remained a close friend for many years.¹⁰ Gentz listened respectfully as the generals expressed their opinions of the situation, and by July he was won over to the view that the Austrian armies were inferior to the French in everything except morale. The noisy *enragé* Baldacci might think that the French had "a miserable fellow," an "ordinary ignorant general," at their head; Gentz knew that they had Napoleon. The Austrians, on the other hand, were saddled with an emperor of whom Gentz had become contemptuous, and their generals, in his opinion, did not equal the great galaxy of French marshals, who had particularly distinguished themselves in the

⁹ Wittmer, "Ligne, Müller, Gentz, et l'Autriche," in *Annales Prince de Ligne*, 6:229; Mistler, *Madame de Staël et O'Donnell*, 32.

¹⁰ Varnhagen's statement of June 25, 1809, from Wagram is palpably misleading: "Almost no one knows anything of Gentz," he wrote to Rahel. "The officers do not know his name at all." Weldler-Steinberg, *Rahel Varnhagen*, 135-136. Knesebeck, who went on an official mission from the Prussian to the Austrian court in 1809, had a different and far more accurate account of Gentz's position. Gentz's "acquaintance with the more thoughtful minds, as well as with the military men," wrote Knesebeck, "has resulted, up to now, in his being not without influence." E. Wertheimer, "Ungedruckte Briefe Friedrich v. Gentz' aus dem Jahre 1809," in the *Neue Freie Presse*, Vienna, August 31, 1887. The most striking indication of Gentz's relations with the generals is to be found in his numerous letters to Bubna and to Johann Liechtenstein. Evidence also appears in his diary. See his *Tagebücher*, 1:59-60.

recent campaign.¹¹ He concluded that only if the war were renewed "in another spirit, with other instruments, and on another basis," could Austria succeed, but that "the continuation of the war in another spirit and with other instruments was, for important reasons, simply out of the question."¹² His labors, therefore, were very actively for peace, and toward this end he made by far his most important contribution to Austrian policy of the year 1809.

Following the conclusion of the armistice on July 12, Napoleon informed the Austrian emperor through Prince Liechtenstein that he was ready to begin peace negotiations. The *pourparlers* began in the middle of August with Metternich and General Nugent as the official Habsburg representatives and Bubna as their liaison man with the Austrian emperor. During the first days of August, in a memoir intended for Metternich, Gentz laboriously developed his ideas on the kind of peace which would conform to the existing military situation and at the same time safeguard reasonably the interests of Austria. He then convinced himself of the futility "of giving weak advice to these gentlemen," held the memoir back, and contented himself with conveying in a letter to Bubna "a few fragmentary thoughts," which he believed might do some good. He asked Bubna to let Metternich see the letter. From Gentz's "fragmentary thoughts" it is evident that he still regarded Austria's position, both in the present and with respect to the future, as comparable to her position in 1805 and in 1801. First of all, he declared, Austria must come out of the war with her freedom of action unimpaired and with the way open for the eventual recovery of her military strength. She must avoid a promise to pay a large indemnity and give no indication of any change in her principles.¹³

Although Gentz was ready for peace, he clearly did not yet believe that the situation was serious enough to warrant Austria's agreement to any terms *à la Tilsit*. The French emperor, however, was thinking of just such a treaty, and from time to time he dropped pointed references to the abdication of Francis, to the separation of the crowns of

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 165, 172, 174-175; Francis L. Bickley, ed., *Report on the Manuscripts of Earl Bathurst Preserved at Cirencester Park* (Historical Manuscripts Commission, London, 1923), 120; Kübeck, *Tagebücher*, 1:270; Anton Freiherr von Krones, *Zur Geschichte Oesterreichs im Zeitalter der französischen Kriege und der Restauration, 1792-1816: Das Berufsleben des Staatsmannes Freiherrn Anton von Baldacci* (Gotha, 1886), 142; Stein, *Briefwechsel*, 3:165.

¹² Fournier, "Gentz und der Friede von Schoenbrunn," in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, 144:228; *Gentz und Wessenberg: Briefe des Ersten an dem Zweiten*, edited by August Fournier (Vienna and Leipzig, 1907), 25.

¹³ *Tagebücher*, 1:105; Fournier, "Gentz und der Friede von Schoenbrunn," in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, 49:107-110.

Austria, Bohemia, and Hungary, and to other Draconian measures. The Austrian war party, which enjoyed temporarily the support of Francis, was far from ready to assent to such stipulations. The negotiations spun themselves out into September and reached a stalemate; on the tenth Gentz reported to Stein that "the renewal of the war is to be regarded as unavoidable." He was thereupon put to work on the preparation of a new martial manifesto, but he utilized a confidential channel to impress on the emperor the necessity of a military diversion in northern Germany by the English and the German people themselves, if another Austrian campaign was to have any chance of success.¹⁴

Meanwhile Napoleon lost patience with the chronic indecision of the Austrian government and with the word play of "the diplomatic juggler," Metternich. When General Bubna appeared at the palace of Schönbrunn on one of his periodic journeys from Austrian headquarters, Napoleon staged a tantrum, flung his hat on the floor, and peremptorily demanded acceptance of his terms. For three hours Bubna held his ground. When finally he returned he was able to tell his master that Napoleon had relented on the question of abdication and on splitting up the empire into its three component parts.¹⁵

Gentz had already made up his mind that even harsh terms should be regarded as acceptable, and on September 16 he told one of his English friends that "to prolong . . . this war for a few provinces more or less, when *all* the military odds are evidently and probably against us, appears to me to verge on a vain delirium." Peace, he continued, was the only alternative to a "final destruction" of the Habsburg monarchy; and therefore he desired peace. On August 20 he had mentioned the definite abandonment of Tyrol (which Austria had already lost by the Peace of Pressburg in 1805) as the only territorial sacrifice to which the Habsburgs could honorably agree; but now, a month later, in the face of Napoleon's demands for Galicia, Austria's Adriatic coast line, and a large area in the hinterland, he cared nothing "for a few provinces more or less." He brought his views forcibly to the attention of Johann Liechtenstein, whose inclination toward peace was thereby strengthened. Turning next to the war party he concentrated on Ferdinand Palffy, who on September 24 confessed that he too had begun to lose his enthusiasm for war. Following up this advantage Gentz secured Palffy's promise to talk with the empress. That night Palffy, in turn, converted her to

¹⁴ Stein, *Briefwechsel*, 3:173-174; *Tagebücher*, 1:66; Fournier, "Gentz und der Friede von Schoenbrunn," in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, 144:240-241; Krones, *Zur Geschichte Oesterreichs*, 137, note; Klinkowström, *Aus der alten Registratur*, 36-37.

¹⁵ Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, 7:386-388.

peace, and she is supposed straightway to have worked the same change in the sentiments of the emperor.¹⁶

It was just in time. The following day an important conference was held to decide whether the terms brought back from Schönbrunn by Bubna should be accepted as a basis for peace, or utilized as an excuse for the resumption of hostilities. Stadion half-heartedly stated the case for the small remaining war party, but Liechtenstein argued for peace with real conviction. The emperor formally went over to the peace party. It was a momentous decision. Gentz credited himself with doing more than "perhaps any other individual" to bring it about.¹⁷

The task of continuing the negotiations was now transferred from Metternich to Prince Liechtenstein, while Bubna continued his duties as liaison man between the Austrian delegate and his home government. A new problem now came to the fore — that of an indemnity. With Napoleon demanding one hundred and thirty-four million livres, and with Liechtenstein instructed to agree to no more than thirty millions, it appeared that the conferences would break down after all and that hostilities would be resumed. At this juncture Gentz stepped in to strike another telling blow for peace. As late as the middle of August he had emphatically opposed the payment of a large indemnity, and he had confessed to Bubna that he gasped when he heard such sums as sixty, eighty, or one hundred millions mentioned. In October the Austrian finance minister, O'Donnel, still asserted that such sums were out of the question, but Gentz, who considered himself something of an expert in economics, had now come around to the opinion that even one hundred and forty millions could be raised — "not all at once, but, by means of an arrangement, in installments." Liechtenstein and Bubna were placed in a most uncomfortable position. Between October 8 and October 13 they conferred endlessly with Champagny, the French delegate, who finally scaled his demand down to eighty-five millions: "Take it or leave it." As Liechtenstein well knew, to leave it meant war. To take it, on the other hand, meant that he must ignore his instructions and suffer probable disgrace when he faced his own government. A letter from Gentz to Bubna, written on October 5, was laid before Liechtenstein and, buttressed by another of October 8, went far to convince the diplomat-general that it was his duty as a patriot to accept the French terms.

¹⁶ Klinkowström, *Aus der alten Registratur*, 40; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 70-71; *Tagebücher*, 1:158; Bickley, *Manuscripts of Earl Bathurst*, 124.

¹⁷ Adolph Beer, *Zehn Jahre oesterreichischer Politik, 1801-1810* (Leipzig, 1877), 440-443; *Tagebücher*, 1:164-175, 187; Fournier, "Gentz und der Friede von Schoenbrunn," in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, 49:110, 111.

Gentz wrote: "When Prince Liechtenstein allowed himself to be sent to Vienna, he sacrificed himself prodigiously to the state. This sacrifice must be completed. If there is still a future for us—and if this most deplorable of all wars is continued there will be none—an approving and understanding posterity will bless him as the savior of the state and as the founder of all the good that can later rise again for Austria." Liechtenstein gave in, and on October 14 peace was finally concluded.¹⁸ Gentz himself gave Bubna, rather than Liechtenstein, the real credit for the peace, and although Habsburg gratitude rewarded Bubna with relegation to an insignificant post at Budapest, Gentz insisted that "without him . . . the Austrian monarchy would be . . . only a beautiful and sad dream."¹⁹

Thus ended Gentz's years of nationalistic zeal. The German governments had repeatedly shown themselves unequal to the Cause as he envisaged it, and Gentz had come at last to a belief in the deplorable necessity of a real recuperative peace lasting at least six or eight years. "I have not become happier, but more restful, more judicial, more tolerant, since I have realized that premature and impotent exaltation ruins the most sacred cause," he explained to an acquaintance of long standing. These words attain full significance as one looks across the threshold into the next phase of Gentz's active life.²⁰

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 49:109–110, 113–114; Criste, *Liechtenstein*, 227; *Tagebücher*, 1:195.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 202–203; Gentz to Paget, February 1, 1810, P.R.O., London, F.O., 7/92.

²⁰ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:306–307; *Tagebücher*, 1:247.

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12. Metternich

NOTHING illustrates better the stability of the old regime than the capacity of its governments to withstand military defeat. A weak and uninspiring Frederick William III could successfully bear the incubus of a Jena, the millstone of a Tilsit. To Austria defeat might bring a Cobenzl in place of a Thugut, a Stadion in place of a Cobenzl, but the Habsburgs seemed destined for everlasting survival. So it was in 1809. Emperor Francis remained, but the direction of foreign policy was transferred from Stadion to Count Clemens von Metternich.

At the outset the chances that this facile young aristocrat could weather the storms of office better than his predecessors seemed slight. "Many officers of distinction in the army" were convinced that the monarchy was tottering to its fall. The emperor, of all people, had resolved to rule alone! The Ministerial Conference, a device created to relieve him of his beloved routine, had been abolished, and Francis stood forth as the sole integrating element in the government. Experience showed that he was unequal to the task, and reform plans were broached from time to time; but nothing was done. Yet the monarchy continued to potter along year after year until the aging Metternich, embellished with medals, was a prince and a chancellor. Metternich continued, furthermore, to direct Austrian foreign policy: even after twenty years his reign at the House on the Ballplatz was but half spent.¹

From 1809 until his death in 1832 Gentz was to be closely associated with Metternich. For at least ten of those years he was Metternich's

¹ *Tagebücher*, 1:187-188, 216-217, 247-249; Carl Freiherr von Hock and Hermann Ignaz Bidermann, *Der oesterreichische Staatsrat, 1760-1848* (Vienna, 1879), 659-661; Stein, *Briefwechsel*, 3:345; C. S. B. Buckland, *Metternich and the British Government from 1809 to 1813* (London, 1932), 36; Kübeck, *Tagebücher*, 1:208-209; Heinrich Ritter von Srbik, *Metternich: Der Staatsmann und der Mensch* (2 vols., Munich, 1925), 1:456-463; Krones, *Zur Geschichte Oesterreichs*, 188-189; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 295; Alfred Stern, *Geschichte Europas seit den Verträgen von 1815 bis zum Frankfurter Frieden von 1871* (10 vols., Berlin, 1894-1924), 1:233-234; August Fournier, ed., "Gentz der Reaktionsär," in *Der Friede*, 3 (1919):462.

closest adviser, and he became the chief mouthpiece through which, in its days of power, the "system" of Metternich found expression. The intimate relation between the two men did not spring into being without preparation; mutual trust and confidence came only after years of increasing knowledge of each other and when, tolerant at last of each other's foibles and appreciative of each other's capacities, they found themselves united in a common purpose.

Metternich and Gentz had already developed a certain instinctive community of outlook, which as early as 1809 caused them both to reason from a given set of facts to similar conclusions. Thus when Metternich at the beginning of his career as foreign minister announced the main lines of his policy, he did so in terms that Gentz could not but approve. Wrote Metternich: "We must confine our system solely to tacking, to effacing ourselves, to coming to terms with the victor. Only thus may we perhaps preserve our existence until the day of general deliverance."²

But there were reasons why Metternich could not immediately use Gentz. The necessity of "coming to terms with the victor" made his active participation in the government most unwise. Bubna, in one of his conversations with Napoleon, had great difficulty in making the French emperor understand that Gentz had suddenly become one of the most convinced peace advocates in the Austrian monarchy.³ Gentz was consequently encouraged to take up residence once more in Prague which he accordingly did, arriving there on November 14. His long years as a free-lance critic and adviser, furthermore, had brought out his innate irresponsibility, and his name was soon linked with an incident that heightened his reputation for indiscretion. General Grünne of the Austrian army had written a series of letters to the Prince de Ligne criticizing the conduct of the 1809 campaign. The amiable prince, knowing that these letters would be of interest to his friend Gentz, gave them to him to read. Suddenly transcriptions of them began to appear in the papers. The Austrian emperor was furious. General Grünne fell into permanent disgrace and De Ligne, for all his princely dignity, was subjected to a day's arrest. Perhaps Gentz was no more than remotely responsible, but the incident was not likely to improve his reputation for trustworthiness.⁴ It should be added, however, that Gentz's

² Du Coudray, *Metternich*, 59.

³ *Tagebücher*, 1:156.

⁴ Wittmer, "Ligne, Müller, Gentz, et l'Autriche," in *Annales Prince de Ligne*, 6:233; Ernst Benedikt, "Les Lettres du général comte de Grünne au prince de Ligne," in *Annales Prince de Ligne*, 16 (1935):197.

irresponsibility was not solely or primarily a result of personal weakness. It derived largely from his deep-rooted desire to keep his independence and to acknowledge no one but himself—and no principles but his own—as master. In this independence he was encouraged by the shortsighted policy of the emperor, who “shouted only when he had to give money,” and who rewarded Gentz with a stipend totally inadequate for the way of life to which he had grown accustomed. Gentz had come, therefore, to lean on the financial assistance of his English and other foreign connections; and though it is true—as his apologists have frequently pointed out—that “he took money only from those who thought as he did,”⁵ he developed no genuine loyalty to Austria until he had achieved financial security from sources directly or indirectly connected with the Austrian government. This had not occurred by 1809, and his best friends, though they admitted that he had first-rate ability and broad knowledge, invariably added that he was indiscreet and frivolous.⁶ Under the circumstances Metternich was wise in acting on the assumption that Gentz, though potentially useful, should be kept at a certain distance.

Toward Metternich Gentz himself blew hot and cold, mainly cold, in the last months of 1809. When it first seemed likely that Metternich would be the next foreign minister, Gentz had gone to some pains to call attention to his own availability as aide. In a letter to General Bubna of July 17 he had said: “Should you, as I suppose, be with Count Metternich quite a bit and sometime know of nothing better to say, then remark that I am here reading all day long what the Latin authors have to tell about the decline and fall of Rome, counting the stars at night, and, since I know of nothing wiser to do, keeping myself physically in good health.”⁷

But a good deal of water had flowed under the bridge since 1803, when Gentz had spoken of Metternich as a “true angel,” and since 1805, when he had “organized cabal after cabal” to get Metternich “placed in charge of all the affairs of the monarchy.” Metternich had gone instead as ambassador to Paris, an appointment of which Gentz disapproved for reasons which he expressed in his own inimitable way. “A soul so pure and sublime as yours,” he wrote, “ought never to have come in contact with the scene of so many crimes and horrors.” In

⁵ *Lettres et papiers du chancelier comte de Nesselrode, 1760-1850*, edited by A. de Nesselrode (11 vols., Paris, [1904-12?]), 2:34-35.

⁶ Max Lederer, ed., “Heinrich Joseph von Collin und sein Kreis,” in the *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte*, 109 (1921): 293-294.

⁷ Fournier, “Gentz und der Friede von Schoenbrunn,” in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, 49:106-107. See also *Tagebücher*, 1:62.

a letter to Brinckmann he touched upon the same subject but in a somewhat different vein: "Metternich loves women without ruling them. This is his weak side." The implication is clear that Gentz hardly considered Paris the ideal place for "the noble friend" to function best. During the years Metternich spent at Paris Gentz had little direct correspondence with him; he knew of his activities there mainly at second hand; and for reasons that are not clear he was not favorably impressed. Upon Metternich's return this impression was not eradicated; after a conversation on October 6, Gentz sized up the new foreign minister as "the most frivolous of men," and he was glad to settle down again comfortably, though somewhat wearily, in Prague, where he devoted himself to society and gambling. At this period in spite of the divergence in their political views, Gentz continued to regard himself as a Stadion man, and his attitude toward Metternich was one of critical appraisal.⁸

There can be no doubt, however, that for all his lack of enthusiasm for Metternich in 1809, Gentz had hoped to secure substantial favors through the intercession of the new foreign minister. He had applied for an appointment as *Hofrat*, but the emperor, who preferred the "sound human understanding and the honest *Sitzfleisch*" of a plodder to the brilliant unpredictability of a Gentz, refused to grant the request. Nevertheless, with typical presumption, Gentz already was telling a friend in January, 1810: "Don't give me the title *Kriegsrat*, which I have not borne for a long time. I am imperial and royal *Hofrat*." With the pleasing Viennese custom of addressing every serious-looking student as *Herr Doktor*, every baron as count, and every count as prince, the vainglorious Gentz, it is evident, found himself instantly at home. When in 1813 the emperor finally gave him the coveted title, Gentz wisely requested that no announcement of the award should appear in the papers, because he had been addressed as *Hofrat* for so long that people were under the impression that he already was one. He had also conferred with Metternich about the possibility of founding a monthly or bimonthly periodical in Vienna, but against Gentz's advice Metternich went ahead with the launching of a semiofficial newspaper instead — the *Oesterreichische Beobachter*, with Friedrich Schlegel as editor.⁹

Pessimistic about Austria's chances for survival and thwarted in his hopes for preferment and advancement under the Habsburgs, Gentz

⁸ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:136-137, 277; vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 39, 58-59; Fournier, "Gentz und der Friede von Schoenbrunn," in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, 49:114; *Tagebücher*, 1:68, 186-187; Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 26-27; Klinkowström, *Aus der alten Registratur*, 33.

⁹ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 73-75, 146-147; Viktor Bibl, *Der Zerfall Oesterreichs* (2 vols., Vienna, Berlin, and Leipzig, 1922), 1:197.

turned once more to England. He had honestly informed his British friends of his conversion to a policy of peace, but he did not dream that his well-wishers in London would regard this as apostasy. On the contrary, he seriously hoped that they would ask him to take up residence on their island, where, as he told one of them, "I would perhaps still be able to make myself useful in one way or another." And if his English friends should regard this proposal no more favorably than earlier proposals of a similar nature, Gentz was still confident that the English government would continue to support his activities on the Continent with benevolent approbation. In token of his faith in England, Gentz proceeded to solve a new crisis in his financial arrangements by covering his debts with bills drawn, without authorization, on the English government. These bills amounted to the tidy sum of seventeen hundred pounds.¹⁰

To soften the shock that this news undoubtedly would cause in certain quarters of London, Gentz wrote several letters to friends, tried and—he hoped—still true. We may be certain that his explanations of his action were made as plausible as possible in these letters, which were entrusted to Benjamin Bathurst, an accredited envoy of England, who was returning home accompanied by an experienced courier named Joseph Kraus. After stopping in Berlin, where he was aided by Bombelles at the Austrian embassy, Bathurst proceeded on into French-dominated territory and arrived at Perleberg. There he suffered "a sad derangement of his moral and intellectual faculties," for "he did a number of things which may be explained only by a calamity of this kind, and then he suddenly disappeared." When the news of this unfortunate mishap reached Gentz he realized at once the extent to which he would be compromised at London. His drafts would reach the British officials without any explanation, and his original presumption would appear in the worst possible light. Furthermore, there was the possibility that the French had seized the dispatches and would spread the story of the seventeen hundred pounds before all the world. In a cautious letter, which did not reveal the extent to which he was personally involved but which played up his friendship with Bathurst and his interest in Kraus, Gentz besought Bombelles to find out all he could about the affair and to let him know as soon as possible.¹¹

¹⁰ Klinkowström, *Aus der alten Registratur*, 45; C. S. B. Buckland, *Friedrich von Gentz' Relations with the British Government during the Marquis Wellesley's Foreign Secretaryship of State, 1809-1812* (London, 1933), 5-7.

¹¹ Gentz to Bombelles, December 7, 1809, in the Haus-, Hof- und Staats-Archiv (cited hereafter as S.A.), Vienna, Interiora, (31K) 95; *Tagebücher*, 1:243; Mrs. Bathurst to [Wellesley?], Berlin, July 29, 1810, P.R.O., London, F.O., 7/95. Kraus later signed a paper

As it turned out Kraus had apparently destroyed the dispatches, which were thereby kept from the eyes of the French, but Gentz's draft on the British government was as unfavorably received as his worst premonitions had led him to anticipate. A change of ministers had taken place: Perceval had supplanted the Duke of Portland as prime minister, and the friendly Canning and Hammond in the foreign office had been replaced, after a short interim, by the Marquis Wellesley and Culling Smith. On the day of his departure from office, Canning had recommended Gentz to his successor, but Hammond, who lingered in office long enough to get wind of the seventeen hundred pounds, was not inclined to be so generous. "I think that these bills should on no account be paid," he said, and his successor, Smith, echoed: "Gentz not to be paid."¹²

Toward the end of January, 1810, this unpleasant news was relayed to Gentz through his bankers in Prague, Ballabene and Company. But the resourceful Gentz was not the man to be easily discouraged by such adversities. He wrote at once to Wellesley explaining the critical situation in which he was placed by England's failure to honor his drafts; he complained of treatment which he did not merit, and even promised to ask no more assistance from Britain if Wellesley would but see him through this time. He also asked Arthur Paget to intercede with the government in his behalf. He finally convinced Ballabene and Company that the whole affair was the result of a lamentable misunderstanding, and on the strength of this explanation the credulous bankers allowed him to draw a new bill for the seventeen hundred pounds! In due time Coutts and Company received news of this latest step from Ballabene in a letter couched in Prague's most elegant English. "Mr. Gentz assures us," ran the letter, "that we could make every reckoning upon your acceptance as he was requesting your goodness, for make the applications to the person, he was informing of." Even this eloquent statement failed of its effect, as did the intercession of faithful Arthur Paget. Wellesley remained obdurate.¹³

Meanwhile Gentz had become involved, somewhat against his will, in the maelstrom of Austrian politics; and the ultimate consequences of this activity were of the greatest importance in restoring not only his Austrian but his European prestige. The war of 1809 had left the which told of Mr. Bathurst's having had "a severe attack of the Hungarian fever which caused a temporary delirium."

¹² Buckland, *Gentz's Relations with the British Government*, 10-11.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 16-19; Ballabene and Company to Coutts and Company, February 8, 1810, P.R.O., London, F.O., 7/92.

Habsburg monarchy in serious financial straits. The paper currency was rapidly depreciating, and from the attitude taken by the responsible officials Gentz was unable to tell whether they felt utterly helpless or whether they actually desired inflation. Whichever was the case, the results in his opinion could only be deplorable. He resolved to put his ideas on record, and the upshot of the matter was that O'Donnel at the finance ministry soon received a memoir in which Gentz defended the use of paper money, but urged the government to resort to decisive measures to halt its fall in value and to announce the steps it was taking to the Austrian people.¹⁴

The memoir made such an impression on O'Donnel that after consulting with Metternich on the propriety of the step, he issued a veritable command for Gentz to present himself at Vienna. The invitation came at an exceedingly awkward time: Gentz had just received the first intimation that the Wellesley government declined to honor his drafts for the seventeen hundred pounds. In view of his financial plight he needed to keep in close touch with his Prague bankers. In a letter he wrote to Mercy at the finance ministry on January 29, he contented himself with the explanation that he had spoken his piece in his memoir, and if there was anything more he could do, it could be done as well in Prague as in Vienna. It is quite clear that he really wanted to stay in Prague. After writing to Wellesley and Paget on February 1, however, and after persuading Ballabene and Company to draw the new bill for the seventeen hundred pounds, he decided to give in to O'Donnel's importunities.¹⁵

Shortly after his arrival in Vienna, Gentz found himself in a position much like that of the preceding autumn. At that time he had taken sides with Metternich, whom he distrusted, against Stadion, whom he admired. In February, 1810, O'Donnel was the only person in high public office at Vienna whom he could be said to admire; but Gentz saw that from inner conviction he must again support Metternich, whose capability he still questioned. He found that the financial measures to be taken had already been decided upon by the time he appeared on the scene, and some of the features of O'Donnel's plan were very displeasing to him. He disapproved notably of the intention to utilize the

¹⁴ Adolph Beer, *Die Finanzen Oesterreichs im 19. Jahrhundert* (Prague, 1877), 413-415, 425-429; Bibl, *Zerfall Oesterreichs*, 1:194-195; *Tagebücher*, 1:217. Fournier, in his "Gentz der Reaktionär," in *Der Friede*, 3:462, goes too far when he says that Gentz "represented . . . the viewpoint that the amount of paper money was immaterial." Gentz merely maintained that the amount issued in Austria did not "surpass . . . the real need." Beer, *Finanzen Oesterreichs*, 428.

¹⁵ *Tagebücher*, 1:219-220; Fournier, "Gentz," in *Der Friede*, 3:462.

property of the church as a guarantee for the currency. As a near-Catholic conservative, he objected to this provision for moral reasons, and in this respect his views coincided with those of both Metternich and the emperor, to say nothing of Adam Müller in Berlin, who was about to begin a militant crusade against any proposals in Prussia to weaken the landed position of church or nobility. Yet in spite of the plan's bad features, Gentz took some consolation in the fact that it was to be administered by such a good man as O'Donnel, and out of loyalty to the finance minister he consented to write an article in the influential *Allgemeine Zeitung* in its defense. This he did, but "carefully and gently."¹⁶

The real significance of Gentz's journey to Vienna in February, 1810, lay not in the purpose for which he had gone, but in the closer relationship thus established with Metternich. By the third day of his sojourn in the city he had concluded that Metternich's principles were now "very sound and respectable," and he admitted that he had become reconciled with the foreign minister "against whom I had a number of grievances at the time of the peace." He noted with approval that routine matters were handled more efficiently than during the Stadion regime, and when Metternich in additional conversations elaborated his ideas, Gentz had to agree that they were "just and reasonable."¹⁷

Together the two men had canvassed the situation pretty thoroughly. Since the recent defeat, the government had been inclined to curb the flood of popular literature let loose by Stadion. There was talk of modifying the press laws, but Gentz advised against it, and after a conversation with Metternich on the subject he admitted being "very well satisfied" with the minister. Nevertheless, before the year was out a new censorship law was on the books, and although its wording seemed liberal, it was often rigorously enforced.¹⁸

The conversations between Metternich and Gentz chiefly concerned aspects of Austrian foreign policy, which by this time encompassed the marriage of Marie Louise, the emperor's daughter, to Napoleon, and a journey by the Austrian foreign minister to Paris for the purpose of ensuring his government a few unmolested years. Gentz was given every opportunity to express himself, and on February 23 Metternich invited

¹⁶ *Tagebücher*, 1:217, 246, 248-249; *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 1:19-22; Stein, *Briefwechsel*, 3:165; Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 37, 42-43; Lederer, "Collin und sein Kreis," in the *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte*, 109:292; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:129.

¹⁷ *Tagebücher*, 1:223, 229; Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 36.

¹⁸ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 76-77; *Tagebücher*, 1:233; Walter C. Langsam, *The Napoleonic Wars and German Nationalism in Austria* (New York, 1930), 147.

him to lay bare in a memoir his ideas on Austria's current problems. The memoir does not survive, and Gentz expressed dissatisfaction with his efforts; but Metternich was pleased with the piece and asked Gentz to follow it up with a discourse on "the most appropriate motives to be presented to the British government as reasons for the British to engage" in a negotiation leading to a general peace. Metternich may have been merely toying with the idea of a general pacification, but Gentz took the matter in earnest and produced a set of arguments that he thought would prove palatable to the English. While he labored over this project, Metternich set forth for Paris. The completed memoir soon followed him there, accompanied by Gentz's hearty good wishes for the success of his mission. Gentz was now more than ever convinced that Metternich's policy was the right policy; he only doubted whether the "fickle, dissolute and presumptuous" young foreign minister possessed the capacity for carrying it to a successful conclusion. At the same time, since no statesman on the horizon gave indication of being any better, and since Metternich was well disposed toward him, he concluded shrewdly that by cultivating Metternich he might open to himself a new field of activity.¹⁹

The unexpected extension of Metternich's sojourn in Paris dissipated any hopes for immediate activity, and it was a Gentz beset by many troubles who moved among the fashionable circles of Teplitz and Karlsbad between May and November. The continued disorder of his finances made him dependent on small loans from friends, but in spite of this hand-to-mouth existence he appeared exclusively in the most select company. His letters, when he touched upon the subject of his general attitude toward the world, events, and men, harked back to the familiar refrain that simple pleasures had lost their charm; but he could no longer lose himself in his work because of a deepening consciousness of futility, born of his attempts to control events that lay beyond his control. Finding it impossible any longer to love life, he tried to whip himself into enthusiasm for the love of God. Rumor had it that in mysticism Gentz sought escape from his ever growing callousness.

Yet, in spite of mysticism and hard times, Gentz was still the routinier of old. Daily, in the summer of 1810, he could be found with Frau von Berg, former *Hofdame* and confidant of the late Queen Louise, and now on equally intimate terms with Louise's sister, the Princess von Solms. Gentz had had the temerity to become infatuated with the

¹⁹ *Tagebücher*, 1:239, 247, 249; Gentz, *Mémoire sur la paix maritime of March, 1810*, with an introduction by C. S. B. Buckland (Oxford, 1931), 4; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 78.

princess, and he extended his sojourn at the Bohemian resorts in order to be with her. She had once been the wife of Frederick William III's brother; she had an attractive figure and was so anxious to please that her charm was often preferred to the greater beauty of her sister. Even a British ambassador had discovered that she was "not totally without coquetterie." Before her first husband died in 1796 the princess had excited much gossip at court because of an affair with Prince Louis Ferdinand, and when in 1799 it was discovered that she had secretly married Prince von Solms-Braunfels, she and her new husband had been expelled from court and had taken up residence at Ansbach. In 1815 she was to marry the Duke of Cumberland and thus eventually assume all the dignity of a queen of Hanover, and an aunt of Queen Victoria.²⁰

It was a real triumph for a man of bourgeois origin to attain such high favor with a blue-blood like the Princess von Solms, tarnished though her reputation might be; and on October 21 Gentz's enthusiasm poured itself out in rapturous letters to three faithful friends—Rahel Levin, Adam Müller, and Gustav von Brinckmann. Rahel, doubtless because of her special capacity for rapture, received the most ecstatic account. "I love the princess to the point of passion," he wrote. "I love her as strongly as I can love anyone. It is utterly inconceivable how completely beautiful, how harmoniously beautiful, she is; always amiable, how endlessly resourceful she is! Believe me, I am hellishly blasé. I have seen and enjoyed so much of the world that one no longer gets anywhere with me through pretense and gorgeous display. Consequently I must be hard hit to speak so of a woman. This woman merits it." Deserted Teplitz, he confessed, had become a "quiet paradise," as summer, so inauspiciously begun, moved to a belated and happy close.²¹

Nevertheless, Gentz was anxious during the summer about what the future would bring. He was particularly interested in the fate of O'Donnel's finance plan. The plan had impressed him as unworkable from the start, and his conviction deepened when O'Donnel died in May, and the currency continued its downward course. The new finance minister, Count Wallis, would soon have to evolve another plan, and Gentz,

²⁰ Sydow, *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt*, 3:337–341; Leitzmann, "Ein Empfehlungsbrief von Humboldt an Schiller für Gentz," in *Festschrift Cartellieri*, 75–76; Gertrude Aretz, *Queen Louise of Prussia* (New York and London, 1929), 21; Lord Granville Leveson Gower: *Private Correspondence*, edited by Castalia, Countess Granville (2 vols., New York, 1916), 1:201–202.

²¹ Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:120; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:313, 422. A letter from the Princess von Solms to Gentz, written not long before her marriage to the Duke of Cumberland, is preserved in the Staatsarchiv at Vienna.

hoping to influence Wallis' policy, entered into correspondence with the patriotic poet H. J. von Collin, who occupied a subordinate post in the Department of Finance. Wallis became suspicious of this correspondence, informed the emperor of it, and an investigation ensued which, curiously enough, merely strengthened Gentz's credit at Vienna.²²

Heretofore Gentz's activities in Bohemia had been subjected to the friendly surveillance of a certain Eichler, an accomplished Napoleon-hater who had participated with Gentz in the negotiation with Goetzen in 1807. Wallis, former governor of Bohemia, knew of their cordial relations, and he wisely surmised that Eichler would scarcely be the man to betray Gentz. He requested that someone else be appointed to dog Gentz's tracks in Teplitz. The emperor also gave directions for an investigation of the relations between Collin and Gentz. Kolowrat, acting governor of Bohemia, von Siber of the Vienna police, and Wallis himself were charged with the task. Kolowrat, later to become Metternich's most serious rival, was a good friend of Gentz, and his report was the important one. Gentz's zeal in regard to Austrian financial problems, Kolowrat declared, sprang not from any malicious intent, but from his desire to serve as a sort of publicity man for the finance ministry. Kolowrat explained that Gentz had his faults, but that he was a man of first-rate ability and broad knowledge. At the moment his personal affairs were "very much disordered," and pressed by creditors, especially from Berlin, he was in real need of assistance. Austria, he concluded, might well do something for him. The upshot of the matter was that the emperor, on September 6, gave instructions that Gentz should be helped out of his trouble and that the state should make what use it could of his talent.²³

All this augured well for Gentz. Men so influential as Metternich, Wallis, and Kolowrat had given evidence that they were well disposed toward him, and the emperor himself, though perhaps grudgingly,²⁴ had acted in his favor. To this more cordial atmosphere at Vienna Gentz returned in November. But he did not take advantage of the situation, because as an individual with a mind of his own he could not conscientiously do so. The internal policy of the government, particularly with regard to finance, continued to displease him. And though Wallis consulted him occasionally, he introduced in 1811 a finance plan dia-

²² Fournier, "Gentz," in *Der Friede*, 3:463; *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 1:23-28; *Tagebücher*, 1:248.

²³ Fournier, *Studien und Skizzen*, 2:136; Lederer, "Collin und sein Kreis," in the *Archiv für oesterreichische Geschichte*, 109:290-298.

²⁴ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 220.

metrically opposed to what Gentz had advised. When Gentz, in spite of his opposition to the plan, was asked to defend it publicly, he refused.²⁵

After Metternich returned from Paris, Gentz found that he differed with him on "various essential points" of foreign policy. Gentz had come to favor a more independent attitude toward France than Metternich found expedient. Austria had been drawn into the Continental System, a policy of economic quarantine through which Napoleon hoped to isolate Europe from England and thus bring the nation of shopkeepers to its knees. Gentz protested against adhering too closely to the Continental System. Nevertheless, throughout 1811 Gentz's personal relations with Metternich became more and more intimate, and although Metternich refrained from taking him into his confidence, Gentz yielded to his persuasion to settle permanently in Vienna.²⁶

The news that Gentz was becoming both more antagonistic to France and more intimate with Metternich soon began to spread abroad, particularly to England, where it produced the happiest effect. During most of 1811 Gentz's financial plight remained pressing, and some doubt exists whether "the aid envisaged by the emperor in 1810 . . . was ever bestowed." So flat was Gentz's purse that he could not even visit Teplice or Karlsbad that summer. In the preceding autumn he had been reduced to making a third *attentat* upon the famous seventeen hundred pounds, this time substituting the innocent Biddulph, Cocks, and Company for the firm of Coutts, which knew too much. Simultaneously he had presented anew his case to Culling Smith at the foreign office. But he received merely the relayed assurance that his credit was as bad as ever with the English government, and Messrs. Biddulph and Cocks were curtly given to understand that "Mr. Gentz's bills are not to be accepted."²⁷

In the meantime Gentz had begun to detect certain reasons, hitherto unknown to him, which helped explain the bad favor with which he was regarded in England. An eccentric British agent named Horn had poisoned the mind of official England against him, and Starhemberg, his supposed friend, had likewise sent damaging reports. By January,

²⁵ *Tagebücher*, 1:251-252. An extended consideration of Gentz's relation to the Wallis policy falls outside the range of this discussion. A manuscript in Gentz's hand, to which someone has added the title "Über die Bancozettel, die Finanz-Patente vom 26. Febr. u. 8. Sept. 1810," may be seen in the Staatsarchiv, Vienna, Interiora (61) 105. It appears to stem from the winter of 1810-11 and may have been intended for publication.

²⁶ Stein, *Briefwechsel*, 3:345-348; *Tagebücher*, 1:214, 252-253, 255; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:316; vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 85; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:122; 5:273.

²⁷ Buckland, *Gentz' Relations with the British Government*, 25; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:122.

Gentz at least guessed the calumnious nature of Horn's letters and took steps, through Kolowrat, to see that they should be carefully watched thereafter by the Austrian police. By May he may also have suspected Starhemberg.²⁸ His position was further strengthened by the fact that in the course of the year two English agents, Johnson and King, took up residence in Vienna and soon learned to value him highly. The Hanoverian envoy, Hardenberg, furthermore, had long been one of his close friends, and the four men—Gentz, Hardenberg, Johnson, and King—with a few others such as General Wallmoden—formed a veritable anti-Bonaparte club.²⁹

On his own responsibility, Johnson in May, 1811, handed over three hundred pounds to Gentz, pointing out in justification to Smith at the foreign office that since Gentz was "on the most intimate footing with Count Metternich, it would be highly impolitic to abandon him altogether." This statement was confirmed by an independent report from Wellesley's Berlin agent, Mills, who passed on the news that "the favor now bestowed on Gentz by Metternich" indicated "that the last-named in reality was not so much attached to the French system as he had lately appeared to be." Gentz, with Hardenberg's and Paget's assistance, took up the cudgels in his own behalf, emphasizing the fact that those who had denounced him to the British government for having changed his principles were guilty of gross misrepresentation. The cumulative effect of these various thrusts was that on August 25, 1811, instructions at last went out for King to "employ the talents of M. Gentz," whenever he should "find occasion for them"; King was also authorized to avail himself of "opportunities of affording him [Gentz] pecuniary assistance." "Apparently without further order from his superiors—[King] decided to pay Gentz the good round sum of four hundred pounds a year." This was something short of the long-yearned-for seventeen hundred pounds; but for the time being it sufficed, and Gentz admitted that he was well content. His relations with the British government had again reached a plane of reasonable cordiality, and he might hopefully look forward to still brighter days ahead.³⁰

Undoubtedly this renewal of the friendly and profitable connection with England was the most pleasing accomplishment that Gentz could

²⁸ Buckland, *Gentz' Relations with the British Government*, 13-14, 19; August Fournier, "Gentz und das geheime Kabinett," in the *Deutsche Revue*, 2 (1910): 71, note.

²⁹ *Tagebücher*, 1:254; King to Castlereagh, February 27, 1813, P.R.O., London, F.O., 7/99.

³⁰ For the foregoing I am indebted to Dr. Buckland's superb monograph on *Gentz' Relations with the British Government*, 26-38. See also his *Metternich and the British Government*, 211.

chalk up for the year 1811. But as the war clouds gathered anew, and France and Russia, "as if caught in the current of an inflexible destiny," drifted toward hostilities, Gentz could rejoice also in the more intimate rapport he had established with the other European courts. Wilhelm von Humboldt had come to Vienna as ambassador, and this old friend not only brightened his social life, but also helped him carry out a modest raid on the Prussian treasury. During this time, also, he formed a valuable and eventually profitable friendship with the young Russian diplomat Nesselrode, and an attempt was actually made to draw Gentz into the service of the czar.³¹

These friendly relations with Nesselrode and Humboldt, and the atmosphere of intimacy that continued to pervade his association with Metternich, must not be allowed to disguise the fact that in the winter of 1811-12 Gentz regarded the European situation more from the point of view of London than from that of St. Petersburg, Berlin, or even Vienna. Metternich had confidentially let him know that when hostilities broke out between France and Russia, Austria would be found fighting cautiously on the side of Napoleon. Gentz, however, favored the risks of neutrality, and he withdrew from society to work industriously on various memorials to show the English that he was not unappreciative of the largess from the London treasury.³²

In these writings which he dispatched to England in the first half of 1812, Gentz occupied himself with two major topics: English financial policy, and England's relation to the Continental system. On the second of these he composed two pieces wherein he laboriously sought to prove that France, not England, had instigated the various measures that had throttled neutral commerce. Written in the vein of his earlier articles in the *Historisches Journal*, these well-meant memoirs lacked great significance, because the English policy that they defended was on the point of being changed.³³ The more important work on English finance also tied in with earlier articles in the *Historisches Journal* of 1799; in fact the theme identifies itself with the articles that first brought Gentz favorably to the attention of important Englishmen. It will be remembered that in 1799 Gentz had argued that the suspension of spe-

³¹ Geoffrey Bruun, *Europe and the French Imperium* (New York and London, 1938), 185; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:316; Gentz to Hardenberg, June 26, 1811, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 92, Hardenberg, K. 14; Humboldt, *Politische Briefe*, 1:319; *Tagebücher*, 1:253, 255-256; Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 2:33.

³² *Tagebücher*, 1:255; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:348; Stein, *Briefwechsel*, 3:397; Humboldt, *Politische Briefe*, 1:325-326; Weldler-Steinberg, *Rahel Varnhagen*, 233.

³³ Schlesier, *Mémoires et lettres de Gentz*, 349-452; *Tagebücher*, 1:258-259; Charles K. Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, 1812-1822* (2 vols., London, 1925-31), 1:107; Buckland, *Gentz' Relations with the British Government*, 39.

cie payments did not warrant the assertions that the financial condition of the country was unsound. By 1809 the rise in the price of gold had led to new doubts regarding the value of the paper currency, and when David Ricardo in 1809 published his treatise "The High Price of Bullion a Proof of the Depreciation of Bank Notes," he touched off a resounding controversy. A Bullion Committee was appointed by the House of Commons to investigate the problem, and the majority report, after asserting that the Bank of England had issued an excessive number of notes, "recommended the repeal of the law of 1797 which suspended cash payments by the Bank of England." Immediately upon the publication of the report panic seized a certain portion of the business community, and a wave of bankruptcies and suicides ensued.³⁴

His attitude on the currency situation in Austria had shown that Gentz was not a conservative hard-money man; he had argued that the amount of paper money circulating in Austria was not excessive, and when he attacked "the chimerical theories of the Bullion Committee" we may be reasonably confident that he reflected a similar point of view. He had hoped to see the work translated into English and published as a book, but the manuscript, due in England by July 15, was apparently lost in transit, and in August and November Gentz sent new copies of the first and second parts, and promised to dispatch the third and final portion also, if he learned definitely that the original manuscript was lost. "Probably no one is concerned about this problem any more," he added disconsolately.³⁵

Though these memorials to England in 1812 lacked the timeliness that their author hoped they would have, the English government was not unappreciative of his well-meant efforts. Gentz had taken unusual pains to extract tangible evidence of gratitude from the Britishers: on April 19, 1812, he addressed a letter direct to the prince regent, the future George IV, who, during the long periods of George III's insanity, exercised the royal authority. Harking back to the happy days in London, Gentz recalled the kindness with which the prince regent had received him: "The remembrance of this kindness will never be effaced from my mind," he declared. Another memory had fixed itself quite as indelibly in his mind, however, the memory of the seventeen hundred pounds, and Gentz shortly came to the point. Fixing his debts at fifteen hundred pounds, he asked the prince to see that they were paid. As bait he promised to give his services to England for the rest of his

³⁴ Fremantle, *England in the Nineteenth Century*, 2:316-319.

³⁵ Gentz to [?], November 8, 1812, P.R.O., London, F.O., 7/98; *Tagebücher*, 1:253, 257; Humboldt, *Politische Briefe*, 1:325-326.

life — for nothing! Fortunately, by the time this letter reached England the Continental-minded Castlereagh had begun his ten years' sojourn at the foreign office, and in November, King in Vienna was instructed to pay Gentz six hundred pounds on the spot and to "promise more if he will be useful."³⁶ This was still something short of Gentz's large expectations, but in the meantime a still more harmonious development in his relations with Metternich had opened up a source of income from a new quarter which disposed of all his immediate financial worries.

At the close of 1811 Gentz enjoyed the friendship of Metternich, but at the same time he definitely opposed his policy of cautious participation by Austria in Napoleon's diplomatic system. Nevertheless, when Austria agreed in March, 1812, to furnish France with an auxiliary force in the forthcoming Russian campaign, Gentz allowed himself to be persuaded by Metternich's skillful arguments to support Austrian policy: Metternich explained that he hoped to utilize the situation to bring about a general peace, he played up the possibility of a Gentzian mission to England, and Gentz, understanding now "the true sense" of the French alliance, became a convert to the Metternich policy and entertained "hopeful dreams" of the future.³⁷

This new loyalty brought its reward. In the Danubian provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia the sultan had entrusted the lucrative administrative control to the grasping care of Phanariot Greek princelings, who bore the title of "hospodar." Since 1774, when Catherine the Great established a kind of protectorate over the provinces, the hospodars had been subjected to strong Russian influence; but the hospodar of Wallachia, desirous of securing information on European affairs from non-Russian sources, eventually arranged to receive regular reports from the Prussian embassy in Vienna. In 1812 a new hospodar, Ion Caragea, decided to turn instead to Austria, and Metternich, remembering a certain impecunious friend, suggested Gentz as the man best fitted to render the desired services. Gentz gladly accepted the job and subsequently favored the successive hospodars of Wallachia with a remarkable series of reports which historians have long regarded as one of the best sources for the period from 1813 to 1828. He built up a clientele of hospodars and would-be hospodars sufficient to raise his income from the not in-

³⁶ Gentz to the Prince Regent, April 19, 1812, P.R.O., London, F.O., 7/98; Webster, *Castlereagh*, 1:107.

³⁷ Criste, *Erzherzog Carl*, 3:293-296; Buckland, *Metternich*, 356-359; *Tagebücher*, 1:259; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 87-88; Gentz to [?], November 8, 1812, P.R.O., London, F.O., 7/98.

considerable thousand ducats a year, at which he started in 1812, to the munificent sum of four thousand ducats.⁸⁸

Thus Gentz, through the good offices of Metternich, at last received a steady income. But as is so often the case, financial independence brought with it a certain spiritual dependence. Gentz's connections with the hospodars made necessary the perpetuation of his confidential relations with the Austrian foreign office, for otherwise his reports would be of slight value. The hospodar of Wallachia made Gentz an Austrian, and Gentz soon gave interesting evidence of this fact.

⁸⁸ For a more detailed consideration of the subject see Paul Sweet, *Friedrich von Gentz and the Danubian Principalities* (Birmingham-Southern College Bulletin, Birmingham, Alabama, 1935) and Nicolas G. Alexandresco, *La Correspondance du chevalier Frédéric de Gentz avec le prince de Valachie, Jean Caradja, et la question d'Orient* (Paris, 1895).

13. The End of the Crusade

DURING THE epochal last six months of 1812, which saw Napoleon's great army march to cruel disillusionment in the heart of Russia, Gentz's correspondence reveals no consciousness that his political views had undergone a profound change. Yet that is precisely what happened. Until the middle of 1812 Gentz's views on German affairs were still those of a confirmed pan-German. Although he had not abandoned the conception of middle European solidarity, he now regarded *Mitteleuropa* from the standpoint of a confirmed Austrian. To state it baldly, he had sold out to Metternich, and he had received in return the lucrative connection with the hospodar of Wallachia. Gentz never admitted in his own mind that he could be motivated by anything so crass as a veiled bribe, and he was sufficiently adept at political casuistry to satisfy himself that he remained loyal to the political convictions which he had so long entertained. It is true that he had paraded always as a believer, first and foremost, in balance of power; and it is true that when at one time he took his stand as a good German nationalist, or at another time as a good Austrian, he worked himself into the belief that as an enlightened European he could do nothing else. But that his European sensibilities should demand a shift from pan-Germanism to arch-Austrianism precisely in the year 1812 — this is something that cannot be explained on the basis of existing evidence without giving a large share of the credit to the persuasive powers of the thousand Wallachian ducats.

This change shows clearly in the attitude that Gentz now took toward his co-worker of 1809, the Freiherr vom Stein. Stein had not altered his views on the German question. Early in 1812 he had been invited by the czar to present himself at the Russian court, and he had lost no time in complying. Soon he was the center of an active group that sought to make the Russian war an excuse for reawakening some semblance of nationalistic fervor among the German princes. Since most

of the German states, including Austria and Prussia, were fighting with Napoleon against Russia, this struck legalistic purists as an act of bad taste at best, and to some it smacked of revolution. At one time Gentz's hatred of Napoleon might have led him to justify and to participate in such activities; Stein wrote to him as an ally in 1812. But his alliance with Metternich and his acceptance of the Austrian viewpoint made him perforce a legalistic purist. He failed to answer Stein's letters, and when the Russian commander in chief issued an appeal, drafted by Stein, for "the Germans to range themselves under the banner of the Fatherland and of honor" Gentz remarked with some heat: "To summon subjects to stand in judgment over their governments is outrageous under all conditions and unworthy of legitimate rulers."¹ He was careful not to attack Stein directly, but on the fiery Arndt, whom Stein had drawn to his side and who was exhorting the German nation to rise with one accord to glorious, hate-inspired activity, Gentz gave full vent to his feelings. "I do not care for the foot-and-a-half words of Mr. Arndt," he told Nesselrode frankly. "I myself make no claim to the sort of eloquence that kindles popular flames; my style is more the kind one uses to extinguish flames. Therefore there is no feeling of rivalry influencing my judgment of his writings. But I believe that they overshoot the mark, and that they can become very dangerous. Furthermore, though very eloquent, they are composed in diabolical taste."²

Meanwhile the Grand Army, which Napoleon was leading against Moscow, neared its tragic end, and Stein in November, 1812, perceiving correctly that "the war will probably become offensive instead of defensive," turned his attentions energetically to the future reorganization of Germany. The German princes, he informed the czar, "have no right, whatever may be their behavior, and whether they resist or submit at once, to demand the maintenance or restoration of their sovereignty; they are at present in the position of enemies, and at the moment of the entrance of the allied armies, the princes commanding them can use their right of conquest as their own interest may dictate." This pointed

¹ Seeley, *Stein*, 2:139-140; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 93-94. Langsam, in his *German Nationalism in Austria*, cites in his bibliography a work by Gentz from the year 1812, called *An die deutschen Fürsten; Und an die Deutschen*. This work actually dates from the year 1814 and was composed of two parts. The first, *An die deutschen Fürsten*, had appeared as a pamphlet in 1813 entitled *Aus dem russischen Lager*, and Gentz was certainly not the author of it. The second part was a reprint of the introduction to his *Fragmente zur neueren Geschichte des europäischen Gleichgewichtes*, first published in 1806. Langsam is altogether unjustified in citing this work (see page 155 of his *German Nationalism*) as representative of Gentz's views in 1812. See also Friedrich C. Wittichen, "Zur Gentz-Bibliographie," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 27:686; J. G. Meusel, in *Das Gelehrte Deutschland*, vol. 5 (1820).

² Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 5:41.

clearly to a radical solution of the German problem, and when in March, 1813, Prussia switched from Napoleon's side to that of Alexander, Kutusoff, the commander in chief of the allied army, immediately issued a proclamation which, though couched in vague terms, indicated a definite intent to do something thoroughgoing about Germany. In 1806, it will be remembered, Gentz himself had declared that German unity was the "only road to salvation" and that German unity must inevitably "be preceded by unity of the national will." But in 1813 when Kutusoff proclaimed in a similar vein that "the more immediately this work of German regeneration shall issue, in its essential structure and outline, from the inmost original spirit of the German people, just that much more vigorous, vital, and united will Germany be able to appear once more among the nations of Europe," Gentz threw cold water on the whole business. He complained to Nesselrode that there was no excuse for stirring up any more popular passion, and he pooh-poohed the idea of making a new German constitution. "How is anyone going to solve this problem," he asked, "which the greatest publicists have pronounced insoluble even in pure theory, at a time when nothing really favors it except a few sterile prayers from a few patriotic hearts?"³

There can be no doubt about it: Gentz knew quite well by 1812 on which side his bread was buttered. He had learned just in time, for he might easily have made a false step and ruined once for all the Austrian career that was opening up to him. For the German people were being worked upon not only from Russian headquarters: in Austria itself a movement was under way to rouse the valiant men of Tyrol to a new insurrection against the French. The British agent King, the Archduke John, and other erstwhile cronies of Gentz were deeply involved. In March, 1813, the vigilant and unsympathetic Austrian police nipped this conspiracy in the bud, a number of estimable patriots landed in jail, and Mr. King was given his walking papers. Gentz, with an eye on the British treasury, was as helpful as he could be under the circumstances. He wrote a judicious letter to Cooke at the foreign office, he aided King in winding up his affairs, and shortly afterward cashed in to the tune of two hundred pounds sterling for his pains. And as a reward for opposing the German policy of the Russian cabinet, he soon received a mark of Alexander's high esteem.⁴

³ Seeley, *Stein*, 2:167-168, 232-233; Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 5:65-67.

⁴ There is an extensive literature on the plot for an insurrection in Tyrol in 1813. Buckland, in his *Metternich*, treats the subject from the British angle as illuminated by the documents in the Public Record Office; Srbik, in his great biography of Metternich, gives the matter brief but clear treatment, but says (1:715) that the story has not yet been told as completely as available Austrian sources would permit. See also Krones, *Zur Geschichte*

Though the road to the coffers of London and St. Petersburg was not yet barred, Gentz by the spring of 1813 was beginning to be viewed with some suspicion in England, Russia, and Prussia, and when a certain British diplomat departed for Germany he was told: "If any circumstances should bring you within reach of Gentz you should certainly keep up a communication with him, though with more caution even than formerly. Because in addition to his vanity—which might then have led him to disclose your secrets, if entrusted with them, to other persons—there is now the circumstance of his connection with Metternich, whose agent he is supposed to be, and with the French government, who most likely on their own terms only have forbore to persecute him. Nevertheless, I cannot help thinking that Gentz, in the main, is sound at bottom and that he would rather serve our cause than that of the French; in which case, he is by far the ablest man I ever met with in Germany—ininitely superior to Pozzo di Borgo and the other agents who have at different times been employed by us and Russia. . . . You must be cautious not to enter into any positive engagements with him without sufficient authority, however; for he is needy, fond of his pleasures, and would entertain great pecuniary expectations."⁵

There is no documentary justification for the suspicion that Gentz had succumbed to the pleasant jingle of the louis d'or, but those who knew his taste for florins, pounds, and ducats may be pardoned if his attitude toward the events of 1813 roused their suspicions. Between the time of Prussia's re-entry into the war in March and the defeat of the Prussians and Russians at Bautzen near the end of May, Gentz had more than once looked forward eagerly to Austria's change to the side of the allies;⁶ but in the main the nationalistic war hawk of an earlier day gave every indication of a thoroughgoing transformation into a coldly calculating, cautious Austrian. Napoleon's position after Bautzen was indeed imposing, but his great losses led him to ask for the armistice, which went into effect on June 4 and lasted until August 10.⁷

Oesterreichs, 65; Bibl, *Zerfall Oesterreichs*, 1:220; Eduard Wertheimer, "Die Revolutionierung Tirols im Jahre 1813," in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, vol. 120; Jakob Baxa, *Adam Müller: Ein Lebensbild aus den Befreiungskriegen und aus der deutschen Restauration* (Jena, 1930), 262–265. For Gentz's relation to the affair, see Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 60–64; Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 5:52–53, 63–64; Gentz to Cooke, March 30, 1813, P.R.O., London, F.O., 7/99 (quoted in part by Buckland in his *Metternich*, 270, note); autograph receipt signed by Gentz, April 1, 1813, in Merry to Hamilton, November 30, 1813, P.R.O., London, F.O., 7/106.

⁵ *The Bath Archives: A Further Selection from the Diaries and Letters of Sir George Jackson, from 1809 to 1816*, edited by Lady Jackson (2 vols., London, 1873), 2:44.

⁶ Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 74–75.

⁷ Kircheisen, in his *Napoleon*, 2:297, calls this armistice "one of the greatest mistakes which Napoleon made during his career."

Gentz, now timidly hesitant, was ready to leave unexploited the great opportunity provided by the armistice. With all the zeal of a convert he argued for peace and declared that a settlement which dissolved the Duchy of Warsaw, restored Magdeburg to Prussia, freed Hamburg from France, and gave the Illyrian Provinces back to Austria would suit him. Such a peace, he believed, could be secured by negotiation and would save Austrian statesmanship from the grave dangers inherent in the growing nationalism of the German masses.⁸ These terms, it is true, reflected in their essentials the views of Metternich; but there was an important difference. Metternich looked upon them as a *sine qua non*; they were terms that Napoleon could accept or reject, but rejection meant war. The Treaty of Reichenbach, which Austria, Prussia, and Russia signed on June 27, embodied this point of view: should Napoleon reject the Austrian demands, Austria would join the anti-French coalition. Gentz, however, maintained that the Austrian terms should be regarded merely as a basis for further negotiations, and when he learned at second hand of the Treaty of Reichenbach, he voiced a hearty protest. Metternich had erred, he said, in allowing his hands to be tied just when it should have been made clear to the allies that if Austria entered the war she would do so when and how she pleased. Metternich laughed off these Gentzian objections with patronizing, though tolerant, amusement. "Gentz," he said, "fears peace because of the consequences which it may have, war for the chances which one runs, cold days on account of the rheumatism, and hot days because of the thunderstorms." By the time the opportune occasion had arrived for laying Austria's demands before Napoleon, Metternich was convinced of the inevitability and desirability of war, and to the stipulations called for by the Treaty of Reichenbach he added other specifications which he knew the French emperor would not accept; namely, "the restoration of Prussia, so far as possible, to her position in 1805, and the dissolution of the Confederation of the Rhine." Meanwhile the news of Wellington's victory at Vittoria, and assurance that Bernadotte would march his Swedes down from the north, brought Austrian war sentiment to such a peak that even Gentz resigned himself to the situation and went to work upon the famous manifesto, which was intended to heighten still further the enthusiasm of the Habsburg subjects for the new crusade. "Since all the world wants war, war is my song," he told Pilat.⁹

⁸ Gentz to Metternich, June 10, 1813, in *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 99-105.

⁹ *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, edited by Adolphus W. Ward and George P. Gooch (3 vols., Cambridge, 1922), 1:401-407; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3,

Gentz was by no means crushed by the failure of Austrian policy to follow the course he had advised. Metternich had taken him to Bohemia in June, and he had remained there through the summer as the diplomats shuttled back and forth between Dresden, Prague, and villages with barbaric names like Gitschin, Ratiborziz, Opotchna, and Nachod, where "the four great sovereigns of Europe with their ministers, cabinets, foreign representatives, a part of their courts, and five or six hundred thousand armed men" huddled elegantly together, lending the glamour of Paris, St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Vienna to the rustic Sudeten region.¹⁰ Gentz had been treated as a man of real importance. He conferred hours on end with Metternich; the czar honored him with an audience during which an edifying exchange of political views occurred; and conversations with smaller fry, such as the ambassadors Wilhelm von Humboldt and Lord Aberdeen, formed part of the regular routine. The Austrian emperor, with whom Gentz for once saw eye to eye, chose this moment to bestow on him the long-yearned-for title of *Hofrat*, and with his pockets full of money, Gentz experienced all the heady sensations of having arrived socially and politically. "I was more than ever stamped as a fine gentleman," he remarked with satisfaction when he revised his diaries years later.¹¹

When hostilities opened, Metternich trailed along in the wake of the armies, while Gentz stayed behind in Prague performing manifold routine duties. He was very busy and felt highly important. Prior to Metternich's departure, he told a friend, "I lived altogether in another and through another. Now all others want to live in and through me."¹²

The campaign opened with an allied setback at Dresden, but Gentz, bustling about officiously, rose above this adversity and glowed with "a feeling of comfort, a delight in myself . . . such as I have not known . . . since 1806." Only with the great allied victory at Leipzig did he begin anew to squirm uneasily. Reports of the "Prussian mania for land" disturbed him deeply, and he prophesied that the satisfaction of Prussia's claims would cause more difficulty than the peace negotiations with Napoleon himself. He suggested to Metternich that Austria and Russia, without consulting Prussia, should agree on the future organi-

pt. 1, pp. 116-120; Sydow, *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt*, 4:92, 96; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 2:369-393; *Tagebücher*, 1:265; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Deutschlands im XIX. Jahrhundert*, edited by Karl Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (2 vols., Leipzig, 1868), 1:42-44 (cited hereafter as *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*). Pilat was Friedrich Schlegel's successor as editor of the *Austrian Observer*. The Austrian manifesto was given circulation even in the United States. *Niles Register*, 5 (1813-14):181-184.

¹⁰ *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:22.

¹¹ *Tagebücher*, 1:266-267.

¹² Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:139-140.

zation of Germany, obtain England's consent, and force the Prussians into line. At this point the negotiations could be brought into the open and the impression produced that Prussia had played a major role in making the arrangements. These arrangements, as envisaged by Gentz, called for the division of Germany into no more than sixteen states bound together by alliances, with an Austro-Prussian alliance forming the backbone of the entire system. "*A German empire*," he concluded, slapping directly at the nationalists, "simply cannot exist today." But "*Austria can and must be the foremost German state*." The Prussian Gentz had become more Austrian than the Austrians. When the news reached him that Metternich was beginning to waver before the widespread demand that the Austrian emperor should once more assume the imperial German crown, Gentz expressed his dismay in vigorous language. And Metternich, against the protests of German nationalists, heeded these words of admonition.¹³

Gentz's opposition to the nationalistic overtones of the *Befreiungskrieg* remained no secret to the German patriots; if anything, they were inclined to magnify his sway over Metternich and to blame Gentz exclusively for the foreign minister's well-known dread of the people.¹⁴ "Gentz exercises a tremendous influence over Metternich," whom "they have dubbed Jitternich [*Zitternich*], because he trembles at every sign of popular activity," Stägemann reported. "Nothing is more contemptible, more depraved," Friedrich Schlegel told his brother, "than to be a half-French diplomat like Gentz. . . . With him everything is secondary to his *hatred for the people*. . . . He never speaks of Germany except with the greatest contempt. . . . The harm that he has wrought during the past winter more than makes up for whatever good he may have been responsible for previously." And Count Karl von Brühl, when he heard from his mother of Gentz's anti-Prussian fulminations, declared vehemently: "If Gentz had stormed against Prussia like that in my presence, a tragi-comic scene would have resulted, for I should have given him a terrific lacing down. And since by nature he is a complete

¹³ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 139, 185, 193-197, 205-207; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:196-197.

¹⁴ Aberdeen to Castlereagh, November 16, 1813, P.R.O., London, F.O., 7/103: "I confess that Prince Metternich appears to me to have too great a dread of *disorganization*. Finding the people ready to support the government, he has not had recourse to any measures by which an enthusiastic spirit and independent movement may be excited among them. He is, I think, too anxious to make the Government the sole Source of Action and indeed has not sufficient respect for the unassisted and spontaneous exertions of the great body of the people. Any general movement of this kind he deprecates as tending to disorganize the State of Society, and declares that it is from the experience of the war in 1809 that he deprecates a recurrence to similar measures."

poltroon, he would have been very polite thereafter.”¹⁵ These comments, however, were but faint rumblings compared to the lashing excoriation that Gentz received in the letters of Rahel Levin.

Rahel, better than any other, typifies the first generation of culturally emancipated Jewish women of German birth. She hailed with frenzied enthusiasm the rebirth of German literature and the birth of German nationalism. Goethe and Prince Louis Ferdinand were the demigods of her cult. Gentz, it will be remembered, had long been one of her intimates. Since his departure from Berlin they had corresponded in terms of the highest mutual trust. The little Levin had a style singularly adapted to long-distance tête-à-têtes. “She belonged,” wrote Heine, “to those authors for whom a certain intellectual intoxication is a prime requisite for good writing,” and Gentz, provided the separating distance was wide enough, made a splendid foil. “Your letters,” he told her, “do not affect me at all, as letters. They are not letters. They are a kind of continuous music, which first gently, then mellowly and powerfully, brings all my heartstrings into vibration. . . . Your letters will always excite me to the point of intoxication.” Entering too well into the spirit of the epistolary bacchanalia, Gentz one day found himself writing: “It has really been a terrible mistake . . . for us never to have attained love toward each other — I mean serious complete love. There might have arisen between us a relationship such as the world has seldom seen.” Rahel, it appears, took these words at near their face value, and she was angry and humiliated when she discovered that they were largely rhetorical. For Gentz dropped the love theme like a hot potato; the music of Rahel’s letters may have continued to agitate his heartstrings, but it suddenly ceased to elicit an epistolary response.¹⁶ By 1812 Rahel was not merely taxing Gentz with neglect; she was dragging ugly skeletons out of the closet of his past and accusing him of neglecting an illegitimate child, which he was rumored to have sired by a certain Fräulein named Schlick.

Gentz, in an extraordinarily frank reply, admitted to having used Fräulein Schlick “as an absolutely ordinary prostitute,” but he went on to state flatly: “. . . this child — for reasons which I cannot set forth in writing — could not be mine.”¹⁷ Satisfied with this explanation, Rahel

¹⁵ Rühl, *Briefe und Aktenstücke*, 4:261; *Fr. Schlegel's Briefe an seinem Bruder August Wilhelm*, edited by O. F. Walzel (Berlin, 1890), 542–543; Hans von Krosigk, *Karl Graf von Brühl* (Berlin, 1910), 303–304.

¹⁶ Heinrich Heine, “Über Ludwig Börne,” in *Sämtliche Werke*, 11:126 (Hamburg, n. d.); Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:114–115, 118–119.

¹⁷ Gentz to Rahel Levin, December 20, 1812, in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Varnhagen Nachlass. Most of this letter was expurgated by Schlesier in his edition of Gentz’s correspondence with Rahel. See Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:124.

journeyed to Prague in the summer of 1813 ready for the "relationship such as the world has seldom seen." Gentz tried to warn her not to expect too much: "Your loyalty, your steadfastness, and your firm trust move me deeply," he declared; but, "I don't know whether we still understand each other, or shall still get along well together. I have become terribly old and bad."¹⁸ Rahel laughed off these words of caution as fanciful, but she found them, alas, all too true. Expecting an understanding heart, she found a diplomat, cold as a corpse, who paid court to titles but who had forgotten the warm glow of love.

In letter after letter to Karoline von Humboldt and to Varnhagen von Ense, her future husband, Rahel then proceeded to flay Gentz unmercifully. She exhibited him parading his fifty pairs of shoes and his fifty pairs of gloves with amusing and innocent delight, while creditors of long standing knocked hopefully at his door. She held him up as an egotistical, self-centered, shallow parvenu, who "knows no longer any world except that contained in the coteries of the people of fashion."¹⁹ And yet twice, in August and again in December, she came out point-blank and declared her love for him. Upon the latter occasion Gentz, having safely removed himself from the confines of Prague, replied: "I shall never cease to place the highest worth upon the interest which you take in me."²⁰

Diplomats, Rahel had earlier noted, "have a phraseology of their own in speech as well as in dispatches," and she wrote indignantly to Karoline von Humboldt: "The gallant note-polisher calls the love I have expressed for him, interest!" The sympathetic Karoline replied: "Gentz is all too much Gentz in the copy of the letter you sent me. Everything that he writes is like a memoir, like a declaration of war or a proclamation of neutrality. . . . He doesn't like us, us Prussians, you understand. The actual spirit which has gripped the nation, which thousands have expressed clearly in word and deed, has passed him by. That results from the fact that he does not know what love is." Here Karoline touched a theme that Rahel eagerly took up. During the campaign in southern Saxony, with the wounded pouring into Prague from all sides, she had experienced a frenzy of patriotism. She had bathed the wounded, served and wept for them, solicited funds for them from friends far and near. But from Gentz she had heard only, we Austrians this, and we Austrians that; whereas of Prussia he had spoken as she "would not speak of India!" "The windbag!" she frothed. "From Prus-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 128.

¹⁹ Weldler-Steinberg, *Rahel Varnhagen*, 268-270.

²⁰ Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:170.

sia he received all his education, the very nourishment for his old body and soul, freedom of thought. Teachers, comrades, friends, relatives—all Prussian, and all forgotten. And the reward? Metternich's acquaintance!"²¹

Thus echoed the hue and cry against Gentz the apostate. He himself, however, was concerned chiefly about the amount of trust that Metternich was willing to repose in him. Distance and time were doing their work, and he no longer could boast of an intimate knowledge of Metternich's views. "I will say quite frankly," he wrote Metternich on November 13, "that I am often troubled by the thought that you are surrounded by so many people who are especially devoted to you, while I—not the least of your true servants—know myself to be so widely separated from you." But instead of a prompt summons from Metternich to join him, he received the humiliating "advice" to beat a retreat to Vienna, though to salve his pride he was allowed to make the journey by way of headquarters. Gentz was greatly piqued, but his diary offers only the cryptic comment that "private reasons," which were completely known to him and which were not so much in his interest as in that of someone else, lay behind his relegation.²²

Regretfully on December 4, 1813, Gentz set forth from Prague for headquarters in Freiburg. His political hopes at this time centered on a peace that should leave Napoleon on the throne of a France bounded by the Alps and the Rhine. Arrived at his destination, he was relieved to find Metternich still in accord with this point of view, though convinced that military operations should continue while peace was negotiated. Against this program Gentz had no complaint. But before he left headquarters for Vienna the difficulties of carrying it out were evident: the enthusiasm of Blücher's army would be hard to control, and the secret plans of Alexander and Bernadotte for the French throne had become known to the inner circle of Austrian statesmen. The situation was thus fraught with complications when Gentz, after performing some useful service in the matter of Swiss neutrality, left Freiburg on January 18, 1814, and set forth for Vienna, which he reached on January 29.

The question of the French throne now interested Gentz more than any other. Disturbed by the way public opinion threatened to force governments to enact its will, angered at Alexander's apparent aim to use the desires of superpatriots to substitute slyly a Russian for a French

²¹ Leitzmann, *Briefwechsel zwischen Karoline von Humboldt, Rahel, und Varnhagen*, 142, 147, 150-151.

²² *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 206; *Tagebücher*, 1:271.

hegemony, Gentz sought with all the persuasiveness at his command to strengthen Metternich's original intention to maintain Napoleon on the French throne. It was his thesis, as it had been Metternich's, that a Napoleon ruling a France pushed back into its old bounds would not conflict with the reorganization of Europe, based on balance of power, that they both thought so desirable.

The pressure of his allies, however, forced Metternich to compromise. He agreed to carry the military operations into the heart of France, and the success of these measures forced the abandonment of the idea of a Rhine-Alps boundary. In return Metternich persuaded Alexander to relinquish his daring plan of placing the French crown on Bernadotte's head. The question of the throne was left for the moment in abeyance, while the allies negotiated in vain with the French at Châtillon.

More closely in contact with affairs than Gentz and more keenly aware of what was practicable and what was not, Metternich had already decided that the most Austria might hope for was a regency of Austrian-born Marie Louise. Gentz, who had feared the dangers of defeat more acutely than had Metternich, now viewed the consequences of too decisive victory with greater bitterness. He was sure that the annihilation of Napoleon meant the triumph of the revolutionary spirit as exemplified in the nationalism of Blücher's army — the very spirit that the allied sovereigns were supposedly combating and which he, indeed, had spent the best part of his manhood in opposing. He argued that Napoleon was the legitimate ruler of France, as legitimate as the king of England, for example; he argued that foreign powers had the right to intervene in the internal affairs of a sovereign state only to uphold the principle of legitimacy; that if Napoleon or any other ruler misgoverned his own state, foreign powers had no right to interfere. His concern about legitimacy was clearly a subordinate corollary of his concern about the restoration of balance of power; but the fact was that Napoleon would not fit into a balanced system. Metternich perceived this salient point sooner than Gentz did, and in resigning himself to the overthrow of Napoleon he acted more consistently.²³

The negotiations at Châtillon, which had opened on February 3, 1814, dragged along until March 19. Because neither Napoleon nor the Russians showed any steadfast desire for peace, they arrived nowhere. Backing the Russians, furthermore, was the clamor of English and German public opinion. Only Metternich, and the responsible statesmen of

²³ Srbik, *Metternich*, I:177.

England and Prussia who sided with him, hoped sincerely for a successful outcome. As it became more evident that the odds were too great for Metternich to push through his policy, the most desperate expedients began to appear desirable to Gentz. He thought of a resurgence of Napoleonic power, which might sweep the allies back across the Rhine, as something to be welcomed with subtle resignation; and on the eve of the Treaty of Chaumont, upon which the "Confederation of Europe" was subsequently founded, he said that his greatest desire was to see the coalition buried.²⁴

Although Gentz supposed himself a model of discretion, he did not limit such heresy to private communications with Metternich. His opinions, though uttered in presumably confidential circles, found their way into police reports. A rebuke from Hudelist, who had charge of the foreign office during Metternich's absences, was approved by Metternich, although he himself displayed an understanding tolerance for the Gentzian vagaries.

The rebuke chastened Gentz somewhat but by no means completely. After the breakdown of negotiations at Châtillon the allies came out in a public declaration for the restoration of Louis XVIII. On April 11 Gentz, in his report to Caragea, the hospodar of Wallachia, explained in a tone of cool detachment why circumstances had made this step inevitable. But with the czar's avowed intention to let the French people give Louis the sort of constitution they desired, he was furious. The Bourbons, he thought, would be the tools of the Russians anyway, and to heap insult on injury by forcing upon Louis the "revolutionary" doctrine of popular sovereignty seemed to Gentz intolerable. He launched vigorous protests to Metternich; and turning to his friend Pilat, he asked: "Did I wage war on the Revolution for twenty-four years *in order that* finally *all* its fundamental principles should be triumphantly enthroned and solemnly proclaimed by the greatest sovereigns and ministers?"²⁵

Gentz thought that his public career was over. The disposal of Napoleon and the delineation of the French boundaries consumed Metternich's time, and for understandable reasons he did not bother to write to his eager but frequently critical friend in Vienna. Though somewhat encouraged by indications that Louis XVIII was to be less under the Russian thumb than he had expected, Gentz refused to be enthusiastic about events in the shaping of which he himself was denied a hand. He

²⁴ Phillips, *Confederation of Europe*, 74; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 271.

²⁵ *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:136.

cultivated an air of boredom with public affairs, collected pretty bric-a-brac for his house, and wrote letters to his friends telling them how blasé he had become.²⁶ Even the exciting news that the momentous reorganization of Europe would be wrought in Vienna — almost on his own doorstep — drew from him only a careful yawn.

²⁶ *Tagebücher*, 1:276; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 298, 300–301; Prince Richard von Metternich-Winneburg and Alfons Freiherr von Klinkowström, eds., *Oesterreichs Theilnahme an den Befreiungskriegen* (Vienna, 1887), 351; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:171–173.

14. The Congress of Vienna

SINCE MAY, 1813, except for a brief period of exultation after the battle of Leipzig, Gentz had been quite unmoved by all the fine talk about the "liberation of Europe." It might once have been said that in all Christendom Napoleon had no more ardent opponent than Friedrich Gentz, but by the summer of 1814 Gentz thought he knew the world too well for optimism. Enthusiasts might palpitate in eager expectation of salvation; Gentz could only croak that new evils would supplant the old. Nevertheless plenty of gusto was still left in him. When he had nothing better to do, he might, indeed, nurture his middle-aged *Weltschmerz* and declare that he had neither appetite for tavern delights nor fire enough for the girls. But he sat down to extravagant breakfasts every morning and gave the ladies their due share of his attention.¹

Thus, though his cynicism regarding politics and statesmen was very real, Gentz was quite ready to work the assembling congress for the excitement and fame there was in it. In the course of the summer he became reconciled with his chief and acted once more as confidant, mediator, and scapegoat in the famous Metternich-Sagan amatory entanglement. The art of circulating in high society had developed into a sort of profession with him, and he thrived in that atmosphere where "visits become duties"; where "clothes, card playing, the most idle gossip" become "business, important." Not long before the congress assembled, when there was abundant social intercourse and not much work, his only regret was that the time was too short to allow him to do everything he wanted.²

Once the fine people had congregated in Vienna, however, it was

¹ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 181; Metternich and Klinkowström, *Oesterreichs Theilnahme*, 92; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:137; Sydow, *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt*, 4:373.

² *Tagebücher*, 1:278; Weldler-Steinberg, *Rahel Varnhagen*, 270; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:178.

politics, and not the spectacle of the Prussian king "dancing to the music of a single clavier," which came first with Gentz. Politics with him was a serious matter, but politics as practiced at Vienna evoked from him mainly cynical and sardonic remarks. People in general might expect great things from the congress; Gentz did not. Almost at its outset he wrote: "I think I can assert with assurance that it [the congress] will bring none of the advantages that Europe had the good nature to expect from this assemblage." And when he had seen the statesmen of Europe four months at work, his original conviction was only deepened: "The high-sounding phrases, 'reconstruction of the social order,' 'reformation of the European political system,' 'lasting peace based on a just division of power,'" he wrote, "were at best produced to calm the people and to invest this solemn assembly with a dignified and sublime appearance. The true aim of the congress consisted, however, in the division among the victors of the spoils." And when, finally, the work of the congress was done, he could see nothing accomplished other than a distribution of the spoils. Although he had hoped for "a general reform of the European political system, guarantees for an eternal peace—in short, for the return of the age of gold," the congress had produced only "some restitutions decided in advance by force of arms—some arrangements among the great powers little propitious to future equilibrium and to the maintenance of peace in Europe—some transfers, arbitrary enough, in the possessions of the smaller states; but no act of a highly elevated character, no great measure of order or of public safety which would indemnify humanity for its long sufferings or reassure it as to the future."³ These were the judgments not of a man whose role was insignificant and who was soured by that fact, but of one of the most important participants in the congress.

In a sense, the Congress of Vienna is a figure of speech, hallowed and sanctified by long usage. Vienna in the fall of 1814 had the makings of a congress: in addition to the swarm of monarchs, queens, toadies, generals, mistresses, courtesans, actresses, painters, musicians, aristocrats, Jews, salesmen, lobbyists, social climbers, placemen, and princelings, Vienna possessed all the requisite plenipotentiaries for a congress. Yet the congress as such never came into existence, except in so far as its

³ Metternich and Klinkowström, *Oesterreichs Theilnahme*, 447-448, 450, 496; J. G. Lockhart, *The Peacemakers, 1814-15* (London, 1932), 104; *Dépêches inédites du chevalier de Gentz aux hospodars de Valachie, pour servir à l'histoire de la politique européenne, 1813 à 1828*, edited by Anton Count Prokesch von Osten (3 vols., Paris, 1876-77), 1:153-155. Cited hereafter as *Gentz aux hospodars*.

Final Act gave coherence to the scattered and apparently uncoordinated and unsystematic labors of nine months.

No one had planned it that way. The victorious Great Powers, although determined to keep the direction of affairs in their own hands, had assumed that their decisions would be referred from time to time to all the plenipotentiaries in plenary session assembled. When it became obvious, however, that Talleyrand intended to use the plenum to thwart the will of the victorious allies, the Four Powers postponed any formal assembly, first until November 1, 1814, and then indefinitely. In the meantime a directing council composed of the chief representatives of Austria, Prussia, England, Russia, France, Spain, Portugal, and Sweden had been formed. Metternich was president of this committee, Gentz its secretary, "and in this sense they were President and Secretary of the Congress."⁴ Except for the work on the German constitution, which was delegated to a separate committee, the big five on the committee of eight were charged with the major negotiations which were carried on at Vienna.

Gentz's office was the business center of the congress. The most important plans and declarations were the work of his pen. To him alone "was left the task of drawing up the form of the treaty," and upon him devolved the task of editing the document in its final form. It was a huge job, and friend and foe alike agree that Gentz was one of the hardest workers at Vienna. Furthermore he was eminently well equipped for his duties. No man of his time could draft a diplomatic document with such recognized proficiency as he, and the various foreign delegations availed themselves liberally of his services.⁵

Gentz's position at the congress, however, was not limited to the sphere of his technical skill. His diary offers abundant evidence that his activities were many and varied. On October 29, 1814, for example, he wrote: "Passed a part of the morning at Metternich's home. Dined at the house of the Prince de Ligne. Conference with Lord Castlereagh, the chancellor, Nesselrode, Humboldt, Wessenberg, and Prince Metternich on the means of setting the congress in motion. I talked a great deal; I killed the idea of the congress. The conference lasted until 12:30 A.M. There followed a special conference with Castlereagh and Metternich on Poland. Then still another hour with Metternich regarding his affair with the duchess. Returned home at three o'clock in the morning.

⁴ Charles K. Webster, *The Congress of Vienna, 1814-1815* (London, 1919), 87.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 78, 80, 87; Sydow, *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt*, 4:559; H. von Gagern, *Mein Antheil an der Politik* (4 vols., Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1823-33), 2:176.

Found some very agreeable dispatches from Bucharest." Varnhagen von Ense, an unfriendly observer at Vienna, who came into possession of Gentz's diary in manuscript, might indeed comment: "As well-informed adviser and lucid expositor, he was of importance everywhere and to the persons of highest rank; the foremost statesmen associated with him on a plane of equality. At that time there could be no doubt who Gentz was."⁶

Gentz felt his importance and took pleasure in it. Upon few men of burgher origin did the prince royal of Bavaria and the king of Denmark wait hat in hand. He looked upon "the plane of equality" as no more than his due, however, for the more he saw the responsible leaders of Europe in action the more contemptuous he became of their ability and the more convinced of his own.⁷ He made the most of his importance. The most troublesome matter to be laid on the table at Vienna, the famous Polish-Saxon question, found him taking an emphatic stand. Behind this tangled issue lay a long history of diplomatic intrigue.

During the few years between the final partition of Poland in 1795 and the Peace of Tilsit, the eastern boundary of Prussia ran diagonally northeast from the southern extremity of Silesia to a point approximately midway in the course of the Niemen River. Warsaw lay within Prussia's borders. After Tilsit, however, the various Polish lands that Prussia had received from the partitions were, with the exception of West Prussia, to be found in the Duchy of Warsaw. The king of Saxony had been made titular head of the new state, and in 1809 western Galicia had been taken from Austria to increase the territory of the Duchy.

From the beginning of the War of Liberation it had been evident that Prussia and Austria would probably have difficulty in getting back all their former territory in Poland. Alexander was determined to set up a constitutional monarchy in Poland with himself at the head, and at the beginning of the campaign in 1813 Prussia had, by inference, consented to some such arrangement, stipulating merely that Posen should be returned to her and that she should be recompensed for other territory once hers by its statistical, financial, and geographical equivalent elsewhere. If Alexander read into this a promise of Prussian support for

⁶ *Tagebücher*, 1:324; K. A. Varnhagen von Ense, *Denkwürdigkeiten des eignen Lebens* (4 vols., Leipzig, 1843), 3:278. See also August Fournier, *Die Geheimpolizei auf dem Wiener Kongress: Eine Auswahl aus ihren Papieren* (Vienna and Leipzig, 1913), 167; Maurice Henri Weil, *Les Dessous du congrès de Vienne, d'après les documents originaux des archives du Ministre impérial et royal de l'Intérieur à Vienne* (2 vols., Paris, 1917), 1:213.

⁷ *Tagebücher*, 1:325, 344, 348-349.

his plans for a Polish monarchy, he can scarcely be accused of mere wishful thinking.

Austria had played a cosier game. She had kept a free hand on Poland, for the Treaty of Teplitz of September 9, 1813, simply looked to "a friendly arrangement between the three courts of Russia, Austria, and Prussia on the future lot of the Duchy of Warsaw."⁸ A friendly arrangement indeed! The Austrians were violently opposed to the creation of a kingdom of Poland. They steered Prussia halfway into their camp by using Saxony as bait to tempt the Nordic greed of Hardenberg and his ilk, and when the diplomats assembled at Vienna they did so in uneasy awareness that their first task must be to consider all possible ways and means to break the deadlock. England was backing Austria, and Alexander was isolated. His isolation was Olympian; he was adamant and seemed willing to fight. Metternich and Castlereagh did not want to fight; they wanted peace, a peace that made as few concessions as possible, to be sure, but peace nonetheless. They were experienced diplomats. They knew that a diplomatic campaign can be a long affair, and hoping for the best they dug in for the winter.

Gentz had seen the storm brewing throughout the summer preceding the congress. He knew that among equals deadlocks are peacefully broken only by compromise. The congress, he perceived, would have a grand façade. There would be glitter and romance, and a barrage of high-sounding phrases to impress the multitude; but behind the scenes there would be nothing but compromise — glorified horse-trading. He held his nose and went to work.

Gentz had always looked upon the original partitioning of Poland as a crime against the public law of Europe; but let the dead bury the dead, he reasoned. Poland was a sad memory; she could not be resurrected. Alexander's desire for a new kingdom was a travesty on history, another trick that the living wanted to play on the dead. Behind this view of the situation lay Gentz's fear of Russia, his dread of a new colossus from the East replacing the colossus of the West to grind Middle Europe under heel. Echoing his master, he professed a grudging willingness to see Prussia take Saxony in order to thwart Russia. "Necessity commands the maintenance at any price of the bond of friendship and of mutual trust between Austria and Prussia," he told his Wallachian correspondent on September 5, 1814.

There is strong reason to believe, however, that Metternich and Gentz never intended Prussia to emerge from the congress with all of Saxony.

⁸ Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, 8:187.

Austria's concessions, which were temporary and tactical, were designed to defeat Alexander's territorial ambitions so far as possible. If, for example, Russia should thereby be kept east of the Vistula, it is inconceivable that Austria ever meant to let Prussia retrieve much of Poland and obtain all of Saxony as well. Gentz let the cat out of the bag when he declared on September 27, 1814, that "the pretext for this acquisition of Saxony by Prussia will be weakened in proportion as the part of the former possessions of Prussia in Poland, which Russia will obtain, becomes less considerable."⁹ This perception that the whole Saxon negotiation must be kept on a tactical, bargaining level explains, in part, Gentz's ardent opposition to Austrian admission that Prussia had a legal right to Saxony. Castlereagh, anxious to bring Austria and Prussia into a more formal and dependable alignment, had urged Austria to assent to Hardenberg's proposal that Saxony be provisionally occupied by Prussian troops, with the understanding that this provisional occupation should eventually become permanent. Castlereagh was unwilling to admit that this was mere horse-trading: he sought to hang a halo of rectitude over the heads of the diplomats involved by the obfuscating device of pretending that Prussia had a legal claim upon Saxony.

This piece of British casuistry was too much for Gentz. Practical reasons, in his opinion, might justify Austrian assent to the incorporation of Saxony by Prussia, but the act could not be *legally* justified. "In the most energetic language" that Metternich "ever had heard" from him, he lodged a forthright protest.¹⁰ He presented a point of view which was becoming cardinal with him: the unjustifiability on legal grounds of an intervention to remove a legitimate sovereign. It was the same argument that he had developed the preceding spring in defense of Napoleon, and which in the coming years he was to use so frequently in connection with the Greeks.

Metternich was inclined at first to accept Gentz's arguments and to pursue a course in accord with them; but it was so urgent that he follow along with England that he finally gave in and agreed grudgingly to the Hardenberg proposals "on the explicit understanding that Poland be saved and Mainz be kept out of Prussian influence." He might well have heeded Gentz's advice, for shortly afterward the czar con-

⁹ *Gentz aux hospodars*, 1:100. See also W. Kohlschmidt, *Die sächsische Frage auf dem Wiener Kongress und die sächsische Diplomatie dieser Zeit* (Dresden, 1930), 64; Klothilde von Olshausen, *Die Stellung der Grossmächte zur sächsischen Frage auf dem Wiener Kongress* (Quakenbruck, 1933), 9.

¹⁰ *Tagebücher*, 1:318; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 303-304 and note.

vinced Frederick William III that Russia merited his support; and Hardenberg had to inform Metternich that he could not "act further with Austria and Britain in the determined matter which had been agreed."¹¹ By November 5 the deadlock was thus more pronounced than ever. Talleyrand at least was well content.

Recriminations flew thick and fast. The czar stormed at Metternich, even talked of a duel. Gentz, who all along had been more unyielding on Saxony than his chief, had his own ideas on how to deal with the crisis. In his opinion the time for Metternich's attempts at conciliation had passed. Austria must look to her diplomatic fences; she must put them in order and then present a stern front to the Russians and Prussians. This meant a *rapprochement*, first of all with France, secondly with the south German states. A memoir to this effect, which Gentz is said to have composed, caused widespread comment.¹²

An Austrian clique, headed by Schwarzenberg and Stadion, had been critical all along of what they considered Metternich's weakness. As the congress progressed Gentz drifted more and more into this anti-Metternich camp. He encouraged Schwarzenberg to oppose Metternich's "weak palliatives"; he criticized Metternich's frivolous waste of time, particularly in the company of that "clan of whores," the princesses of Courland.¹³

Gentz and Talleyrand, on the other hand, became thick as thieves. Retailers of backstairs gossip attributed this to the fact that the wily Frenchman came bearing gifts. Talleyrand also carried a liberal portion of flattery's sweet oil and a disarming proposal that Gentz move to Paris and take service with the French government. Nevertheless the simple explanation that Gentz had sold out to the French cannot be naïvely accepted. Anyone who reads what Gentz and Talleyrand had been independently writing in the months before the opening of the congress will perceive at once that their thoughts had been coursing through much the same channels. Gentz was convinced that he was best serving Austrian interests by lending support to the French position. As early as February 15, 1814, he had protested against the exclusion of France from the coming negotiations; such exclusion, he maintained, was not conducive to the permanent well-being of Europe. Need one be surprised, then, that Talleyrand, when stating the French

¹¹ Bruno Gebhardt, *Wilhelm von Humboldt als Staatsmann* (2 vols., Stuttgart, 1899), 2:83; Webster, *Castlereagh*, 1:347-349.

¹² Du Coudray, *Metternich*, 139-140; Fournier, *Geheimpolizei*, 73, note; Webster, *Castlereagh*, 1:552; Stein, *Briefwechsel*, 5:183.

¹³ Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 86; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:186-187.

case at his first meeting with the leading ministers, noted that he had made an impression "particularly on M. de Gentz"? ¹⁴

Obviously Gentz was no opponent of the treaty of alliance that Austria signed with France and England on January 3, 1815, a treaty designed to force the Prussians to back down on Saxony. And the Prussians did back down, accepting eventually a compromise very similar to that forecast by Gentz as early as September 27, 1814.¹⁵

The embittered feelings aroused by the controversy brought all sorts of charges ringing about Gentz's ears. He had minced no words on the subject of Prussian greed, and the Prussians repaid him with a loud chorus of abuse, which Treitschke, who admired Gentz's political insight, was still echoing sixty years later. To the Prussian patriots it was always inconceivable that a native son should not want the Fatherland to gobble up everything in sight. Even Metternich was said to have chided Gentz for his "un-German expressions," and his own brother in Berlin spoke of him scornfully as a reprobate. The letters of many other old friends bristled with words of denunciation, and casual observers resorted to out-and-out slander. At last even the Saxons lambasted him for failing to support their cause to the last ditch. With such nasty rumors making the rounds, it is not surprising that a zealous agent of the Austrian police came to the conclusion that Gentz was "a spy for all the powers at the same time."¹⁶

Gentz had made himself an easy target. He had talked a lot, and he had taken money from everybody. This was well known. His abundant resources — and the abundance was magnified by malicious tongues — provided fine food for gossip. The governing class of the day, predominantly aristocratic and scarcely aware of the source of its own income, found it easy to scorn a man like Gentz, who must live largely by his wits. There were, besides, numerous adventurers in Vienna who envied him for his success where they had had none. In his opinion, however, the whole congress was a sordid business, and since he had chosen not to remain fastidiously aloof but to dirty his hands in the mess, he did so without squeamishness.

This does not mean that Gentz lacked all integrity. Where major

¹⁴ *Tagebücher*, 1:326, 343; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 243-244; Talleyrand, *Mémoires*, edited by the Duc de Broglie (5 vols., Paris, 1891-92), 2:280.

¹⁵ *Gentz aux hospodars*, 1:99-102.

¹⁶ Stein, *Briefwechsel*, 5:224; Sydow, *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt*, 4:425-426, 430, 438, 559; Fournier, *Geheimpolizei*, 22, 256-257, 378-379, 385; Varnhagen, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 3:315; Weil, *Congrès de Vienne*, 2:24, 140, 195, 240; C. A. Endler, ed., *Der deutsche Gedanke bei den mecklenburgischen Verwandten der Königin Luise* (Leipzig, 1932), 155-158; Hedwig von Olfers, *Ein Lebenslauf*, 1:237, 261, 265 (Berlin,

issues were concerned he was by no means without steadfast principles; but on questions that he considered of scant importance his scruples were few, as typical entries in his diary indicate. On April 30, for example, he notes: "I got Prince Schwarzenberg [to agree] that he would persuade the emperor to give the Grand Duke of Baden a regiment." And on May 10: "The Grand Duke of Baden . . . has made me a present of one thousand ducats." According to Humboldt, this method of transacting business was not peculiar to Gentz; it was the way business generally was carried on at the congress.¹⁷

Gentz took a hand in a number of miscellaneous questions. Among them may be mentioned his support of the English in their fight to abolish the slave trade,¹⁸ his help to the Jews in raising their civil status,¹⁹ his apparently quite gratuitous labors to improve trade relations between Austria and the United States, and his efforts to secure the appointment of Erich Bollmann as American consul to Vienna.²⁰ The German publishers, however, who desired an adequate German copyright law, did not find him so cooperative.²¹

Taken as a whole Gentz's record at the congress, in spite of the slander that found its way into the police record, was creditable enough. If a leader with the power and personality of Alexander had appeared on the scene and had approached the large problems from a European rather than a selfish standpoint, Gentz in all probability would have lent his enthusiastic support. Early in February, 1815, for example, Castlereagh raised the question of a general declaration by the powers signifying their intention to maintain the newly established order. Gentz was asked to draft such a declaration. In the document he accordingly produced he spoke in eloquent terms of the aforesaid peace, having apparently forgotten in the heat of composition that he himself thought the settlement largely disgraceful. Alexander was almost moved to tears when he listened to Gentz's composition, and Metternich expressed ad-

1908); *Aus Nostitz's Leben*, 152, 162-163; W. Dorow, *Denkschriften und Briefe zur Charakteristik der Welt und Literatur* (5 vols., Berlin, 1838), 4:88, 134; Rühl, *Briefe und Aktenstücke*, 1:371.

¹⁷ *Tagebücher*, 1:375, 377; Sydow, *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt*, 4:565-567.

¹⁸ Gentz to Caragea, January 20, 1815, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (31K) 95; Metternich and Klinkowström, *Oesterreichs Theilnahme*, 495; Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Gentz*, 2:93; *Tagebücher*, 1:352; Webster, *Castlereagh*, 1:423, 424, note.

¹⁹ Count Egon Caesar Corti, *The Rise of the House of Rothschild*, translated by Brian and Beatrix Lunn (New York, 1928), 102, 103, 152-153; Salo Baron, *Die Judenfrage auf dem Wiener Kongress* (Vienna and Berlin, 1920), 49-54, 67-69, 118-123, 130-133, 138-145, 200-205; *Tagebücher*, 1:365, 368, 369, 371, 374, 381, 382, 385, 386.

²⁰ This episode is treated in some detail in Paul Sweet, "Erich Bollmann at Vienna in 1815," in the *American Historical Review*, 46 (1941):580-587.

²¹ Bertuch, *Tagebuch vom Wiener Kongress*, 194-198, 257-260.

miration for such consummate skill in the dissimulation of actual conviction.

Although his participation in the Congress of Vienna has done more than anything else to make Gentz's name familiar to students, it does not mark the zenith of his influence in the Austrian state. So well did he perform his specific duties that henceforth no general congress during his lifetime was complete without him, and the various courts rewarded him liberally for his services.²² His own government, however, confined evidence of its appreciation to an award of the Cross of Civil Merit, which indicated fairly well the amount of esteem the emperor had for his services.

²² *Tagebücher*, 1:324, 344, 356, 383-386.

15. The Second Peace of Paris

THE MOST COMMON phrase used for pigeon-holing Gentz — and one sees it frequently in reference works, casual footnotes, and indices — is “opponent of Napoleon.” The phrase carries with it implications that do not fit the facts. Gentz did not oppose Napoleon on personal grounds: Napoleon, the man, he admired. He opposed rather the imperialistic principle that Napoleon represented. After the battle of Leipzig, Gentz was convinced that Napoleon no longer embodied the danger to European balance; he believed, on the contrary, that a strong France with Napoleon at its head offered the best guarantee for a satisfactory peace. On May 12, 1814, he had, indeed, written a hypocritical letter to Louis XVIII in which he pretended to have longed always for a Bourbon restoration; and at the Congress of Vienna he worked in close harmony with Talleyrand. Nevertheless, to a certain extent he had remained a partisan of Napoleon. On various occasions he expressed admiration for the way France had been governed during the Napoleonic period, and he opposed the use of drastic measures against the deposed emperor, whom he considered harmless enough at Elba.¹

Thus when Napoleon packed up and left his Liliputian realm Gentz, although genuinely surprised, was not bitterly indignant. When he wrote the declaration of March 13, 1915, directed by the powers against Napoleon, he did what he could to soften its tone. And when he had fully grasped the import of Napoleon’s phenomenal success in France, Gentz adopted a surprising attitude, which he set forth on April 24 in a remarkable confidential memoir to Caragea. The allies had been congratulating themselves on the fact that they were assembled at Vienna when news of Napoleon’s escape came, and had thus been able to concert on measures immediately. Gentz viewed this circumstance in a different

¹ Metternich and Klinkowström, *Oesterreichs Theilnahme*, 342, 468, 688–690; Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 84, 148–160; Weil, *Congrès de Vienne*, 1:45.

light. He thought such concentration of the responsible heads a positive misfortune: it had been possible for them to act not only quickly, but too quickly — particularly from the point of view of Austrian interests. Austria, in his opinion, had nothing to fear from Napoleon “even on the supposition that he could ever become again as of old.” And according to Gentz’s reasoning there was no possibility of Napoleon’s again becoming “as of old.” For without the support of the constitutional element in France he would fail, and that element had no intention of allowing him to regain his former status. It would therefore have been most desirable, Gentz believed, if the powers had accepted Napoleon. As it had turned out, however, Metternich allowed himself to be carried along the common path. A further impairment of the balance of power seemed inevitable.²

The situation was analogous to that of the first months of the preceding year. Whereas Metternich found it more politic to be cooperative and tractable, to subordinate what Gentz considered Austrian interests to the desires of his allies, Gentz took the line that the general interests of Europe, conceived in terms of balance of power, coincided with Austrian interests. Such had been his attitude since the winter of 1813–14, when it became evident to him that the coalition masked a multitude of selfish aims and personal ambitions. At that time he had written that his policy was daily becoming more egoistic, more truly Austrian;³ and so it had remained throughout the Congress of Vienna. That it must be so had affected him deeply; he had become cynical and somewhat indifferent. He has often been accused of being a soulless tool of Metternich’s,⁴ but the statement damns him unjustly; for it indicates a failure to understand that in Gentz’s case, during 1814–15, the soul was there, but imprisoned. When, eventually, out of the conflicts of the period ending in 1815 the powers drew into a more harmonious group and developed a policy that seemed to subordinate selfish desires to a common interest, the “tool” became an enthusiastic co-worker.

In the spring of 1815, however, Gentz did not believe that what most Europeans wanted represented true European interests.⁵ A strong

² Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 53–54, 86–87; Adolphus W. Ward, “The Congress of Vienna,” in *The Cambridge Modern History*, 9:646; Metternich and Klinkowström, *Oesterreichs Theilnahme*, 592–616; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 1:166.

³ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 271.

⁴ Helmut Tiedemann, *Der deutsche Kaisergedanke vor und nach dem Wiener Kongress* (Breslau, 1932), 111.

⁵ Srbik, in his *Metternich*, 1:219, speaks of Gentz’s criticism of Metternich because he acted “as a European, not as an Austrian” in supporting the Bourbons in 1815, thus putting “European” interests before “the interests of Austria.” This, it seems to me, misses the point of Gentz’s criticism. Gentz believed that a strong Austria was in the best interests of

France in his opinion was essential to a healthy Europe, and a strong France would best be ensured by Napoleonic rule. He even found a Napoleonic regime consistent with the formula of legitimacy, arguing in oft-quoted words: "Legitimacy is born in time; it can therefore be considered not in an absolute, but only in a relative, sense; and from time to time, like everything human, it must be modified."⁶

But when Napoleon let it be known under what sort of constitution he proposed to govern, Gentz realized what an air castle he had constructed. He was forced to admit that there was indeed no practical alternative to a Bourbon restoration, and when he was summoned to Metternich's side at Paris to aid in the negotiation of the new peace, the question of the throne was already settled.

The policy Metternich proposed to follow Gentz found on the whole satisfactory. Metternich was not prepared to admit that Germany's territorial demands were justified; at the same time he was not willing to inflict so light a punishment on France as Castlereagh and Alexander now desired. As Gentz had foreseen, the final territorial settlement followed fairly closely what Metternich had in mind, and he was quite pleased with it.

Gentz's official duties at Paris were much the same as those he had performed at the Congress of Vienna, and since they entailed considerable bustling about, he felt satisfactorily important. In agreement with his chief on the larger issues, he was able to play "a more active and significant role than before"; yet, by his own admission, he was "morally responsible for only a few of the results" reached at Paris. He had become, by now, so much a fixture at international gatherings that the proposal was "seriously" discussed of making him permanent secretary general of Europe.⁷

During the latter half of 1815 Gentz was bothered chiefly by two bogies: the ambition of German nationalist-expansionists and the senseless machinations of ultraconservatives. At first the Germans annoyed him more, but the excesses of the ultras soon convinced him that in them lay the real danger. He reacted by a swing to the left, which was

Europe, if Europe were to seek its well-being in balance of power. He would therefore not agree that Metternich was really serving European interests in adopting a policy that conformed to the clamor of German, Russian, and British public opinion; his criticism was directed against Metternich the malleable politician, not against Metternich the European. See Metternich and Klinkowström, *Oesterreichs Theilnahme*, 615-616; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 1:170.

⁶ *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 199, 202-203.

⁷ *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:184, 187, 208; Webster, *Castlereagh*, 1:459, 477; Weldler-Steinberg, *Rahel Varnhagen*, 427; *Tagebücher*, 1:421.

only halted when circumstances in late 1817 drew him again to the right.

Upon his arrival in Paris Gentz was particularly fearful that the spirit of revenge in the army of occupation would endanger the already shaky position of Louis XVIII and prepare the way for new troubles in France. The Prussians exasperated him especially, and his own experience with them on the way to Paris evoked the declaration that he would prefer to let himself be "captured by the French than delivered to the protection of those beasts."⁸

The dislike, however, was by no means wholly on Gentz's side; the German patriots returned it in full measure. As if it were not enough, they reasoned, for Gentz to have helped quash any hopes for a national and liberally governed German state, as if it were not enough for him to have helped wrest Leipzig, Dresden, and Chemnitz from the Prussian grasp, he was now actively engaged in keeping the Alsace-Lorrainers from joining their eager German brethren. Anxious to make him pay for what some called his "betrayal," a clique of Prussians engineered an intrigue to embarrass Gentz publicly. Involved in it was Varnhagen von Ense, who not long before had married Rahel Levin.

From the correspondence of Varnhagen and Rahel, and from the letters Gentz wrote to Varnhagen, it is evident that the source of the trouble lay in that old sore spot, Gentz's unpaid debts. Rahel told her husband that Gentz's Berlin creditors had been painfully impressed by the reports of "his life of luxury," and that they had been indignant at their failure to find any lawyer in Prague who dared undertake a suit against him. Gentz himself spoke of the possibility of his being publicly libeled and suggested that his enemies hoped to even the political score by spreading broadcast the "story" of his irresponsibility in financial matters. He defended himself as best he could. He claimed that he had honored "all reputable demands" presented to him, and estimated that since 1811 "at least ten thousand thaler" had gone to his "old creditors in Berlin." He admitted that a number of bills might still be outstanding, and, though he insisted that a public summons to all his creditors to come forth was a step which he could not take "for many good reasons," he authorized all his friends to let it be quietly known that he intended to settle accounts. "Although I am far from wealthy enough to pay large sums all at once," he told Varnhagen, "it is nevertheless my firm intention to make an agreement about easy installment payments

⁸ Metternich and Klinkowström, *Oesterreichs Theilnahme*, 702-706; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:159.

with all those in the above-mentioned category, and I hope to depart from the world without leaving behind me any justified complaints of this kind.”⁹

Varnhagen, taking all this at face value, soon came forth with a document showing that Gentz had owed money to a certain Herr von Burgsdorf for more than twenty years. Gentz received this dun after his return to Vienna, and his answer to Varnhagen is interesting. He deprecated the rumors about the “extraordinary gifts” he had received for his labors at Vienna and Paris and insisted emphatically that he was not swimming in gold. “Those gifts just sufficed to pay my *most pressing* debts,” he asserted. When one bears in mind that these extra gifts for the year 1814 amounted to seventeen thousand ducats, and that to them were added one thousand ducats cash from Bavaria and Prussia, four hundred pounds from England, ten thousand florins from France, five hundred ducats from Naples, and eight hundred ducats from Russia for the year 1815, it is evident that his most pressing debts were considerable. Indeed, he referred to his position as one of “financial straits,” and begged off paying the Burgsdorf debt until the end of the year 1816. Varnhagen, who had found Gentz at Paris “intoxicated by his wealth and prestige,” must have been disgusted by this interchange, but Gentz’s financial straits were, incredibly enough, very real.¹⁰

The nationalists justifiably regarded Gentz as one who had done what he could to scotch their hopes for a more united Germany, and when they criticized his financial habits they put him in a position that he could not convincingly defend. But the additional charges that he was inoculated with “the Bourbon-aristocratic spirit of obscurantism” lacked foundation in fact, so far as the Gentz of 1815 was concerned. It need scarcely be said that Gentz could not yet prophesy delightedly with Varnhagen that “out of these storms a vigorous constitutional freedom is going to sweep irresistibly through all Europe”; but it was his deep conviction that for France some sort of constitutional government was most practicable. Although Metternich came to the conclusion that the charter of Louis XVIII was a deplorable document, a revolutionary document, whose one saving grace was its failure to rec-

⁹ Weldler-Steinberg, *Rahel Varnhagen*, 434; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:270; Gentz to [Varnhagen], Paris, October 20, 1815, in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Varnhagen Nachlass.

¹⁰ Gentz to [Varnhagen], March 8, 1816, Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Varnhagen Nachlass; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:208; J. K. Mayr, *Geschichte der oesterreichischen Staatskanzlei im Zeitalter des Fürsten Metternich* (Vienna, 1935), 130; Weldler-Steinberg, *Rahel Varnhagen*, 427. A sketch of Wilhelm von Burgsdorf is in Varnhagen’s *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 4:402-406.

ognize popular sovereignty, Gentz sincerely regretted that Napoleon, upon his return to France, chose not to govern under constitutional forms. In his opinion, the fact should be recognized that the French people wanted a constitutional monarchy. He referred to the ultras with the utmost scorn: "No color is black enough to portray the system and the views of this party. It longs for the absolute counterrevolution, the annihilation of everything that does not appear compatible with the old regime in its full extent." When the Duke of Orleans — upon whom the friends of constitutional government not long before had pinned their hopes — decided to leave the country out of opposition to the trend of affairs, Gentz, like a Lafayette or an Alexander, referred to him as "the only one of the princes who understands the true interests of the country and the course which the king ought to follow to consolidate his power." And on November 22, 1815, he wrote: "Those who in 1814 thought they would be able to re-establish the old regime, pure and simple, have done France as much harm as Robespierre and Bonaparte. But the nature of things is more powerful than men. . . . Absolute power, once it has been totally overturned, will never raise itself again. The *old* Bourbons cannot and should not rule any more."¹¹

Still, since the Bourbons represented "the only string on the lyre," Gentz could but hope that Louis XVIII would try to be sensible and safely surmount the obstacles ahead. Whenever it was a question of making the way less rough for Louis, Gentz did what it lay in his power to do. He not only opposed letting France be ground under the heel of a stern army of occupation, but protested as well against making her pay a disastrously large indemnity.¹²

Without question Gentz was better satisfied with the second Peace of Paris than he had been with the results of the Congress of Vienna. True, he had no great faith in the lofty sentiments expressed in the Holy Alliance. But on the whole the problems at Paris had been considered with commendable disinterestedness, the powers had manifested praiseworthy intentions of working together, and though a number of ominous signs were discernible to the discriminating eye, one might look into the future with a certain confidence. "The moment has now come," Gentz went so far as to proclaim in the *Beobachter*, "when the prospect of a golden age in Europe no longer belongs among the empty

¹¹ Weldler-Steinberg, *Rahel Varnhagen*, 429-432; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:569; Metternich and Klinkowström, *Oesterreichs Theilnahme*, 691-693; H. A. L. Fisher, "The First Restoration," *The Cambridge Modern History*, 9:573; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 1:187-188; Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 5:237.

¹² *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 191; Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 88-89.

dreams." In view of Gentz's gift for rolling out appropriately flatulent phrases, his real opinions probably differed from his high-sounding words. Metternich thought the public should be fed verbiage, and Gentz aimed to please. The article, however, was not allowed to stand unchallenged. Goerres, in his *Rheinische Merkur*, let fly a broadside against those who had allowed France to keep Alsace-Lorraine, and he accused Gentz of insincerity in his defense of the peace. Gentz tossed back this latter accusation as a charge unworthy of a man like Goerres, but he felt constrained to make clear that by the dawn of an age of gold he had meant only a period of peace. He refused to make the nationalist ideology his standard of judgment, as Goerres was doing, and justified French retention of Alsace-Lorraine on the grounds that experience of the past century had shown that French possession of those provinces did not endanger the balance of power.¹³

By 1816 Gentz was already bored with peace. Much as he hated war, he was forced to confess that when a man "has passed the greatest part of his life in the midst of catastrophes and storms, a general peace is an insipid and tedious state of affairs." At Vienna he found himself out of tune with friends, with people in general, and with an existence more or less stale. "You can scarcely imagine," he wrote to a kindred spirit on January 8, "how precious few here have yet comprehended that one must think and act in the year 1815 [*sic*] entirely otherwise than in the year 1794, or 1809, or 1812. . . . Scarcely a day passes that I am not outraged by the miserable twaddle of petrified or half-putrified purists; these people have still no other fear than that the king of France may rule too *mildly*. Our views are completely strange to them." Gentz's friends, Pilat and Adam Müller, were numbered among the "purists" and were made to feel the weight of his criticism. To Pilat he wrote that so long as "obscurantism and tyranny, Ferdinand VII, Labourdonnaye, and Hyde de Neufville" continued to be preached in the *Beobachter*, that paper need expect no support from him.¹⁴ Metternich also fell under his disapproving glance. He was traveling through Italy with the emperor, and in the opinion of his critical aide in Vienna the plaudits of the multitude had turned his head completely.

Without question Gentz's bitterness arose, at least partially, from the fact that Austria alone seemed unappreciative of his services. Other

¹³ Metternich and Klinkowström, *Oesterreichs Theilnahme*, 742-747; Tiedemann, *Deutsche Kaisergedanke*, 131; Eckardt, *Gentz: Staatsschriften und Briefe*, 2:11-31.

¹⁴ Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 5:246; Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 101; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 318.

European powers had rewarded him handsomely for the duties performed at Vienna and at Paris. Metternich of his own accord had assured Gentz that he would support him for an appointment as *Staatsrat*. When nothing happened, Gentz took occasion on January 18, 1816, to bring up the matter again. He knew, he said, that the emperor did not think "especially well" of him; but he considered himself qualified by services rendered in behalf of the Good Cause to be called *Staatsrat*. And if the emperor hesitated to award the title on a purely honorary basis, he would gladly accept regular duties in the *Staatskanzlei*. Months rolled by, but Gentz received neither a reply to this request nor any direct word from Metternich. It is true that Metternich's health had broken down and that for a time his eyesight appeared to be seriously endangered. But Gentz felt that such troubles did not excuse a neglect so complete, and it was with a certain maliciousness that he wrote Wessenberg: "Metternich is supposed to be very much run down and in the worst humor. He dare not read, he dare not write, he dare not go out, he dare not drink, he dare not . . . His eyes are still bad." Rumor had it, furthermore, that Count Mercy was taking advantage of the situation and stood in high favor. Gentz thus had a serious rival, and his dissatisfaction was thereby complete. No one seemed concerned, however, and at the end of 1816 he was still dickering over what reward he might extract from his close-fisted, unappreciative masters.¹⁵

During the first months of 1816 Gentz's primary political interest lay in the Eastern situation. It was his unhappy conclusion that the balance of power, presumably restored by the settlement of 1815, had but a nebulous existence: Europe remained in equilibrium only at the sufferance of Russia, and in the spring of 1816 Gentz seriously doubted Russia's good will. He put up an optimistic front in the dispatches to his Wallachian correspondent, but he lacked faith in his own brave reasoning. By May 7, however, he felt completely reassured and could prophesy that for a number of years "Europe scarcely will offer material for newspaper scribblers."¹⁶

Those first months of 1816 represent a miserable period in Gentz's life. "Sick, feeble, and dejected," he described himself, and as he looked about in Vienna the condition of the country seemed worse than at any time during the wars. To remedy this situation new financial measures were being worked out under the direction of Gentz's old friend and

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 327, 330; Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 5:240; Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 97; Fournier, "Gentz," in *Der Friede*, 3:487-488.

¹⁶ *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 2:181-188; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 322-324; Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 113.

chief, Count Philip Stadion. The latter half of the year found Gentz thoroughly engrossed in these affairs, to such a degree, in fact, that he almost forgot how disgruntled he was. It is interesting to note the regard he now had for "possible" policies, for "realizable" measures; in 1810, he had cooperated only half-heartedly with O'Donnell and Wallis because they did not bring their policies into accord with his own theory of paper money. In 1816, though he emphasized that his theory remained unchanged, he recognized clearly and painlessly that the age was "not yet ripe for such an artificial structure" as his ideas called for; and with the zeal of a partisan he defended Stadion before his critics.¹⁷

Gentz prided himself on the practical, statesmanlike attitude that his diplomatic experience had taught him. Such an attitude seemed lacking in most people in the summer of 1817, and lacking indeed in many of his closest friends and associates. Having made equilibrium the governing principle of his political theories, Gentz had come to conceive of it not merely as a balance of political power between states; he now believed equilibrium should include a balance so far as possible between the conservative and the radical tendencies that were continually operative within the individual state. Between 1791 and 1813 the radical forces had held the upper hand; working through Bonaparte they had endangered the principle of equilibrium in all its aspects. To combat this danger, Gentz had striven with the instruments at his command to restore the old balance. The years 1813-15 had stilled the threat of French imperialism, but other threats had arisen: inordinate extension of Russian power; triumph of the revolutionary spirit, as exemplified in the nationalist ardor of Blücher's army; a stifling resurgence of conservative-reactionary forces. In the years 1816-17 this resurgence, in Gentz's opinion, presented the real danger. To him it was "unmistakable" that the situation had "changed essentially in the last years." No longer was the "traditional" endangered by the "rational." Instead the reverse was true. And in his defense of the "rational" he now emphasized that in his fight against the Revolution he had never opposed progress as such. What he had opposed was the assumption that the world should be made over, and from the inside out. When, however, with the Revolution bridled, men like Adam Müller scornfully junked "*all* the endeavors and *all* the products" of the past thirty years, Gentz recoiled as instinctively as he had from the Revolution itself. On September 5, 1817, he still held to the same line; he told Pilat that on the whole he agreed with those who thought that the French people had

¹⁷ *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 211, 217; Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 5:243.

been made happier, more law-abiding, more thrifty, and more worthy of esteem because of the Revolution.¹⁸

It is interesting to note that so long as Gentz asserted such moderate views, he made no progress toward obtaining from his own government a reward for his service at the congresses. He had got nowhere in 1816 with his desire to be named *Staatsrat*. He had originally scorned the idea of a tidy present in hard cash, but when, in November, 1816, Metternich offered to recommend to the emperor that he be given five thousand ducats, Gentz was delighted and announced that he would give up all claim to titles and decorations. Metternich neglected this friendly chore, unfortunately, and on the first day of January, 1817, Gentz wrote his chief a "letter of major importance," in which he discussed his own interest and that of the state. Not until May 26, 1817, did Metternich take definite action, and then it was merely to draw up a *Vortrag* for the emperor, which Stadion was also to sign, requesting twenty-five hundred ducats and emphasizing Gentz's services in connection with the finance measures. Stadion approved of the idea but declined to sign for fear of dissension in his own department.¹⁹

In spite of his large extra income during the congresses at Vienna and Paris, Gentz, as we have noted, was in financial difficulties even at the beginning of 1816. By the summer of 1817 the deflated condition of his pocketbook caused him serious alarm. To remedy this dismal situation, Stadion finally recommended that Gentz be granted a present, and when Metternich left for a trip to Italy on June 5, 1817, everything appeared on the verge of a happy solution. For almost two months, however, the emperor ignored the recommendation. Finally Gentz, whose plans were made for a vacation at the watering places, decided on a drastic step: from the banker Arnstein he secured five hundred ducats on Metternich's credit, without warning Metternich of his intention. By this audacious act, Metternich was given a stake, willy-nilly, in the wobbly concern of Gentz and Company. Nevertheless, with even this incentive to push the cause of his brash, impecunious friend, Metternich accomplished nothing until November. The emperor was then persuaded to grant the sum Gentz had struggled almost two years to obtain. In the meantime a significant change had taken place in Gentz's attitude toward the policy of the monarchy.²⁰

¹⁸ *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 243-245; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:270; *Tagebücher*, 2:159, 161.

¹⁹ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 319-321, 343, note; *Tagebücher*, 2:87, 101-102.

²⁰ Paul Sweet, "Four Letters from Gentz," in the *Journal of Modern History*, 7 (1935): 448-452.

THE CONSERVATIVE
1817-1828

16. The Henchman at Work

IN CELEBRATION of the tercentenary of the Reformation, four hundred and sixty-eight German students assembled at Eisenach on October 18, 1817, the fourth anniversary of the battle of Leipzig. Nearly half of them came from near-by Jena, but there were numerous representatives from the other German universities. The collars of their shirts were turned back over their coats, which were short and black; their hair hung long; and rudimentary beards adorned their faces. They were members of the patriotic national society, the *Burschenschaft*, which since the War of Liberation had taken by storm the universities of middle and southwestern Germany—Jena, Giessen, Heidelberg, and Erlangen in particular. From Eisenach they marched on October 18 to the Wartburg; there were solemn prayers and a rousing speech, which celebrated “the rebirth of free thought and the liberation of the fatherland.” Luther’s hymn was sung, and a torchlight procession brought the occasion to an end. Afterwards a group from Berlin, more rowdy than the rest, made a bonfire and burned some books written by reactionary authors such as Haller and Kotzebue.¹

On the day of the Wartburg Fest Gentz, occupied with his own troubles, visited Prince Esterhazy, one of the richest men in the monarchy, and begged a loan from him. Gentz’s morale had sunk very low. To his friend Pilat he had written not long before: “The way I have been treated in Vienna during the past year has made a deeper impression on me than I ever wish to admit. . . . Should I remain as I have been during the last four or five months, I can scarcely live much longer; should my physical strength be restored, however, I cannot and will not live *like this* any longer.”² Obviously he was beginning to feel that he had roamed on the wrong side of the fence long enough.

Not until a month after the Wartburg rally, however, did he give

¹ Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 2:245–246.

² *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:272. The date of this letter is September 6, 1817, not November 6, 1817, as printed. See *Tagebücher*, 2:67, 178.

any sign of alarm or of inner compulsion to line up once more with the forces of militant conservatism. On November 17, he noted in his diary a "remarkable two-hour conversation," in which he had discussed with Metternich the newspaper situation in general; on November 26 he published in Pilat's *Beobachter* a blast on the subject of the Wartburg Fest; and on November 29 he received word that the emperor had authorized the payment to him of 11,500 florins.³ True, he had earlier expressed some concern over the trend in Germany, mildly remarking that the need for quiet was more pressing than the need for reform. His tone suggested no horror at the thought of change, but merely regret that the general situation made innovations undesirable.⁴

The Wartburg Fest and the present from the emperor wrought a great change. It is difficult to escape the suspicion that the desire to play a role and to live comfortably again had more to do with Gentz's decision than would have been the case had his character been cast in the so-called heroic mold. Gentz, however, was not a heroic character; furthermore he was now past fifty and liked to pamper himself with the luxuries to which he had grown accustomed. Fortunately for his own peace of mind he soon worked himself into the conviction that he had discovered another Good Cause, and he became genuinely convinced that he was combating subversive influences. Throwing himself into his work with a zeal in marked contrast to his inactivity of the preceding months, he was drawn into frequent consultation by Metternich, he composed a number of important state papers, wrote frequently for the public, and was active in putting an important conservative review, the *Wiener Jahrbücher*, on its feet. Instead of spending his nights in society, he went to bed.⁵

Though Austria was content for the moment to take the position that the time was not yet ripe for the German Confederation to adopt uniform press regulations, Gentz was busy preparing the ground for some sort of general censorship in Germany. Writing to Karl August, "Grand Bursch" of Saxe-Weimar—who had granted a constitution to his subjects which permitted, among other things, freedom of the press—Gentz declared that it would be well to keep in mind the welfare of Germany as a whole, not merely the desires of one's own sub-

³ *Ibid.*, 173-174, 180, 182-184; Eckardt, *Gentz: Staatsschriften und Briefe*, 2:32-35; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 343.

⁴ Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Gentz*, 2:118-119; E. Heyck, *Die Allgemeine Zeitung, 1798-1898* (Munich, 1898), 334.

⁵ *Tagebücher*, 2:184-187, 189, 191, 193-196, 200, 205-207, 209; Stern, *Geschichte Europas*, 1:249-250, 325-326, 339-340; Heyck, *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 204; Eckardt, *Gentz: Staatsschriften und Briefe*, 2:35-48; Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Gentz*, 2:128-129.

jects. And in the first number of the *Wiener Jahrbücher* he published a noteworthy article, "Über die Pressfreiheit in England." He called attention to the fact that although England had no censor, she had laws of libel, and that all this so-called freedom of the press was, therefore, merely relative. Inasmuch as some sort of control was inevitable, Germans must decide which interests were the more endangered — those of individuals or those of society, and by society's interests Gentz meant public order and the existence of the state. In his mind, of course, there was no question: it was society's interests that were in danger. Ergo: censorship for Germany. In England, he went on to say, the situation was quite different. For England possessed certain characteristics that gave the government a peculiar stability, and Englishmen in consequence could afford the luxury of freedom.⁶

The whole discussion was carried on by Gentz at an elevated level. Its dominant tone, however, was sophistic rather than realistic; and although the essay ranks among his more important writings, it is not convincing. In view of Gentz's previous writings, indeed, the entire question of press regulation was an embarrassing subject for him to handle. In his famous address of 1797 to Frederick William III he had come out flatly for freedom of the press, and his opponents liked to call that fact to his attention at awkward moments. In 1810 he had recommended a censorship, as mild and liberal as possible, as a step that would increase "the popularity and moral credit of the Austrian government immeasurably."⁷

By March 14, 1818, Gentz was able to see some tangible results of his recent labors: "Home about one o'clock," he noted in his diary. "Read periodicals, attacks against the *Beobachter*, and against me (which stream in from all sides)." Undismayed by this opposition, he went to work the next day on an anonymous pamphlet directed against his assailants. In a later article he tried to demolish the arguments in support of German unity, defended Austria against the charge that it was an oligarchic state, and scoffed at the idea that Vienna lived in constant fear of the "moral pest" so current abroad. Articles such as this may have made Gentz appear rather foolish in some quarters, but at home he found himself in high favor. What was more, he enjoyed the

⁶ Stern, *Geschichte Europas*, 1:340; Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Gentz*, 2:124-125; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 2:33-109; *Tagebücher*, 2:197, 200, 208; Friedrich Hebbel, *Sämtliche Werke*, 10:69 (Berlin, 1901). See also E. L. Woodward, *Three Studies in European Conservatism: Metternich; Guizot; The Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1929), 130.

⁷ Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 2:28-29; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 77. See also Weick, *Ausgewählte Schriften von Gentz*, 3:11.

fight. "I . . . feel exceedingly well both in body and soul, more vigorous than in years, with a confidence and balance which I hold to be the true joy of life," he noted on May 2, his fifty-fourth birthday. And on June 23 he announced to Adam Müller that in all probability he would not stray far from Metternich's side thereafter. The past winter and spring had indeed been decisive.⁸

In the fall of 1818 Gentz began to reap the full reward for his re-dedication to the cause of conservatism à la Metternich. He was chosen to accompany "the prince" to Aachen, where was scheduled the first of the conferences called for by the Quadruple Alliance of November 20, 1815, to consider "great common interests."

Gentz had originally been somewhat scornful of the pacts solemnly entered into by the allies in the fall of 1815. He had particularly disdained the document known as the Holy Alliance. Although fascinated by the queer urges that underlay it, he saw in the Holy Alliance itself nothing more than a "theatrical decoration," a "political nullity." At bottom he questioned the good will of some of the powers, and especially that of Russia.⁹

By 1818, however, Gentz's forebodings about the intentions of the various courts had vanished, and he viewed the possibility of concerted action by the Great Powers with delight. For years he had been sighing for conclusive evidence of real European accord; and so far as the governments were concerned, harmony did indeed prevail to an unusual degree in 1818. Before the conference opened, Gentz optimistically declared that he would "answer for ten or even twenty years" of peace,¹⁰ and although a few sour notes marred the serene perfection of the Concert, the results of Aachen were eminently satisfying. He also enjoyed something of a personal triumph.

The chief task before the diplomats was to complete the liquidation of the Napoleonic wars. Arrangements had to be made for the evacuation of French soil by the allied troops and the payment by the French of the indemnity still outstanding. These tasks were disposed of in a spirit of amicable cooperation, with Gentz in charge of the protocol as usual and looking after much of the preliminary drafting. Symptomatic of future difficulties in the Concert was the effective British opposition

⁸ *Tagebücher*, 2:212, 216, 225, 227, 229; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 3:45-55; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 255.

⁹ *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:194; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 1:215-216, 222-224; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 328-329; Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 5:249; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 3:20-23; *Tagebücher*, 2:83.

¹⁰ *Gentz aux hospodars*, 1:354 ff.

to the Russian idea that all states should be invited to join the Great Powers in an agreement obliging them to cooperate in repressing revolution against legitimate sovereigns everywhere. Fortunately for the peace of mind of people like Gentz, they could not read the future, and consequently missed the full portent of the subsequent rift in the Concert, which was implicit in the divergent British and Russian views about intervention. Gentz had long been a believer in intervention, and it pained him when at the insistence of Lord Castlereagh the conference contented itself with a vague but lofty declaration of the powers' intention to make "the most strict observance of the principles of international law . . . the fundamental basis" of their future policy. A few months later he took occasion not only to say that the powers intended to abide by their treaties—he went on to proclaim the stronger doctrine that the Great Powers were the "natural protectors" of order based on treaties. Thus Gentz showed himself ready for a step that the British were unwilling to take, and so again, as in 1801, he foreshadowed that very split in the Concert the imminence of which he was vigorously denying.¹¹

Gentz's letters to Pilat and to Adam Müller show that he had an exceedingly good time at Aachen. He was on excellent terms with the representatives of all the powers, and had a larger part in directly influencing decisions on great affairs than ever before. "I can view this congress as the high point of my life," he told Pilat; and he wrote to Müller exuberantly: "Never have the laurels been so heaped on my head as this time. Every day the flattering song was sung to me: 'Without [you] there could be no congress.' They wanted to compel me to marry, in order that my race at least might not die out."¹²

Other reasons besides satisfaction with his own work and with the work of the congress in general played their part in making Gentz's days at Aachen memorable to him. He worked hard, but he found time to mix with the cosmopolitan crowd. Of the diplomats, the Russian delegation appealed to him most: Nesselrode and Pozzo di Borgo were friends of long standing, and Kapodistrias, the rising star in the czar's foreign office—a polished Greek from Corfu, who was reputed to entertain "liberal and constitutional ideas"—became a familiar figure in

¹¹ *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:348; Webster, *Castlereagh*, 2:149-150; Srbik, *Mettewich*, 1:574-575; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 1:406-407; Martens, *Recueil des traités conclus par la Russie*, 7:321-322; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 3:70-74, 96-97; Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Gentz*, 2:173.

¹² *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:349-350, 366; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 266.

his circle. Although Gentz decided that Kapodistrias was "by no means a Jacobin," he feared his influence on the czar: poor Pozzo, though "actually a genius," received less attention from Alexander than "Kapodistrias' coattail." Nevertheless, during the congress the czar "to a certain degree emancipated himself from the influence" of Kapodistrias and acted in a very cooperative spirit. Gentz in gratitude hailed Alexander as "the director and hero" of the gathering.¹³

The people about whom Gentz wrote *con amore*, however, were the bankers, who, he says, provided his real "recreation." The banking fraternity showed up in force at Aachen to gather in the lucrative business connected with the French indemnity and to lobby for Jewish rights. His role of perennial debtor and financial expert had already brought Gentz into contact with a variety of financiers, ranging from the helpful though somewhat unlettered Ballabene of Prague to the incredible Monsieur Ouvrard of Paris. With the patrician Bethmann of Frankfurt, the optimistic Laffitte, the scrupulous Baron Louis; with the Parishes, those enterprising Scotchmen who operated on the Continent, and finally with the Rothschilds, he already had had personal relations of one sort or another. Aachen widened his circle of financial connections. Baring and Labouchère were there from London, Hope from Amsterdam, as well as Solomon and Carl Rothschild, David Parish, and others. "The Rothschilds," Gentz noted in a letter worth quoting, "are vulgar ignorant Jews, outwardly presentable. In their craft they are merely 'naturals' without any sort of suspicion of a higher order of things, but they are gifted with a remarkable instinct which leads them always to choose the right, and of two rights, the better. Their enormous wealth (they are the richest people in Europe) is entirely the result of this instinct, which the crowd calls luck. Now that I have seen all of them at close quarters, the most profound reasoning of Baring inspires me with less confidence than the sound insight of one of the more shrewd Rothschilds—for among the five brothers there is one who is altogether weak and another who is mediocre. If Baring and Hope ever fail . . . I can state with confidence that it will be because they have thought themselves cleverer than Rothschild and have not followed his advice.

"David Parish . . . is the matador, the pearl in the business community of all Christendom. . . . He is one of the most perfect specimens

¹³ *The Diary of Philipp von Neumann, 1819-1850*, translated and edited by E. Beresford Chancellor (2 vols., Boston and New York, 1928), 1:2; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 362-364; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:349, 353, 361; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 1:404. See also Webster, *Castlereagh*, 2:102; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:573.

of man that I have ever seen. Nevertheless Baring, measured according to intellect and knowledge alone, is superior to him.”¹⁴

The cynic upon reading the record will conclude that Gentz had good reason to be exhilarated by the society of these pillars in the world of business. In return for the services, actual or potential, that he was able to render, Parish had already given him an interest in a loan to the tune of 100,000 florins, Solomon Rothschild at Aachen handed over 800 ducats, which he had won for him by speculating in British bonds, and the following year he unexpectedly received 14,880 francs from Baring as his share in a forgotten enterprise. When one remembers Gentz's financial plight at the end of 1817, the conclusion seems justified that the capital for these speculations was put up by Messrs. Parish, Rothschild, and Baring, and that so far as Gentz was concerned he was in on a sure thing: he pocketed the winnings, but the losses, if any, fell to the bankers. Rothschild and Parish, however, must have felt adequately repaid, for in 1820 they floated a sizable Austrian loan, the first business of this kind that the ambitious Rothschilds had been able to secure from the Habsburgs, and Solomon Rothschild settled permanently in Vienna. It was Gentz, the trusted adviser of Stadion, minister of finance, who had accomplished the not inconsiderable feat of getting Metternich to break bread at Aachen with Carl and Solomon Rothschild. The intimate rapport that Gentz established with the Rothschilds in 1818 endured for the rest of his life and secured for him a financial backlog against the monetary adversities of the future.¹⁵

It would be a mistake to infer that Gentz's friendship with the more prosperous bankers was dictated solely by his desire to exploit them for his own personal interest. As one who by sheer talent had risen to eminence in the political world, he felt a frank admiration for men who by comparable efforts had risen to positions of financial power. His cal-

¹⁴ Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 88; *Tagebücher*, 1:411-412; 2:186, 268-269; Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 5:286-287; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 267-268.

¹⁵ *Tagebücher*, 2:238-239, 241, 277; Corti, *Rise of the House of Rothschild*, 203-205, 221-222. In this period, according to Corti, an "agreement" was made between Gentz and the Rothschilds. The existence of a formal agreement in 1818 is merely inferred by Corti, although there can be no doubt that Gentz henceforth did furnish the Rothschilds "with an important source of political information and a connection with Metternich." Corti, however, is not content to speak with certainty of a purely hypothetical "agreement." He goes on, with unpardonable innuendo, to say that the Rothschild connection in 1818 enabled Gentz "to indulge in his expensive middle-aged amour with Fanny Elssler." Since Fanny Elssler in 1818 was about nine years of age, and was to meet Gentz for the first time ten years later, it is scarcely fair to imply that his financial transactions, discreditable as they may have been, were made to support women. The fact is that in the decade 1818-28, the period of his most extensive speculations, he lived, so far as women were concerned, an almost monkish existence.

loused contempt for the problems and political aspirations of the masses, coupled with his scorn of popular sovereignty and his total lack of interest in social reform, led directly to his espousal of an economic attitude that was essentially predatory.

After a conversation with Gentz, Robert Owen first realized the full magnitude of the task which faced the social reformer: "I now foresaw," Owen wrote, "that the prejudices which I had to overcome in all classes in all countries were of the most formidable character, and that, in addition to illimitable patience and perseverance, it would require the wisdom said to be possessed by the serpent, with the harmlessness of the dove, and the courage of the lion." Pilat in Vienna was meanwhile learning that one did not have to be a radical of Owenite stripe to err grievously on the social question. From Aachen Gentz wrote to him wrathfully: "What in the world could have moved you to have that damned address of the Manchester factory workers reprinted in the *Beobachter*?" Metternich, he continued, "declares that this article is one of the most seditious to appear in a public paper for a long time. And what Satan led you so far astray as to add the malicious note: 'There are fifteen thousand of these *fortunate men*'? Don't you ever stop to consider what sort of an impression this sort of thing must make on the people of Vienna, and how little it behooves us to help spread such complaints (which are perhaps entirely without basis)?"¹⁶ It is a pretty safe guess that Gentz proceeded to read the riot act to Pilat upon his return to Vienna. For by now he was thoroughly convinced that the unrest in Germany was really serious and that something would have to be done about it.

There is reason to believe that Gentz's initial counterattack on student radicalism was not induced wholly by genuine alarm; but by the summer of 1818 he was thoroughly aroused about the situation. In February, 1819, he saw Bavaria in danger of becoming a "completely revolutionized state." He did not fail to keep Metternich informed of his dark forebodings. The only fly in the ointment, as he told Adam Müller in December, 1818, was the difficulty of introducing proper measures.¹⁷

¹⁶ *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:341. The Manchester cotton spinners, out on strike in "one of the very earliest struggles on a large scale between the rival powers of capital and labor," had laid their case before the public. William Smart, *Economic Annals of the Nineteenth Century, 1801-1820* (London, 1910), 655. The statement by Owen is quoted from Edmund Wilson, *To the Finland Station: A Study in the Writing and Acting of History* (New York, 1940), 95.

¹⁷ *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:285, 379; Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 6:29; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 348, 361-372; Alfred Stern, ed., "Eine Denkschrift von

On March 23, 1819, the murder of the reactionary dramatist Kotzebue by a fanatical theological student, Karl Sand, gave the Austrian conservatives a convenient excuse to do something. Gentz did not view the crime as merely an excuse for action: he feared for his own life. The news of the murder had reached Vienna on March 31, and Gentz's acquaintances took advantage of the date to play April fool's jokes on him. He received an anonymous note which read: "Let Kotzebue's fate be a warning to you! A dagger killed him! Poison is prepared for you!" Gentz denied indignantly the gossip that he was in a state of dreadful fright, but it was with a certain bravado that he recorded in his diary that he had ventured into the Neue Gasse on April 2. To Metternich, who was in Italy at this time, he wrote: "The murder of Kotzebue is . . . an unmistakable symptom of the degree of *malignity* which the pestilential fever of our day has attained. My opinion has been for a long time that Germany is incomparably more diseased than France." And Metternich's reaction was virtually identical: "I tell you," he confided to his wife on April 10, "the world was in full health in 1789 in comparison with its state today." In a letter to Gentz he faced the situation with fine courage: "My daily battle is against ultras of every sort, until finally the poniard of some fool reaches me too. If the fellow does not come at me from the back, he will get a box on the ears that he will remember for a long time—even if he strikes me."¹⁸

An interesting and most important correspondence ensued between Metternich and Gentz, on the one hand, and between Gentz and Adam Müller—now Austrian consul general in Leipzig—on the other, on what course had best be taken. It was Metternich's immediate intention to act through the German Confederation to get police regulations adopted adequate to stamp out the conspiracies centering in the universities, which he believed were back of all the trouble. "My proposals," he said, "have to do exclusively with the *disciplining* of the universities, not at all with the curriculum itself." Such a program did not meet with Gentz's approval. In the first place, he had never had much use for the confederation, and favored in this instance a program formulated quietly by the larger states. In the second place, he agreed with the

Friedrich von Gentz über die erste baierische Ständerversammlung," in the *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 10 (1893):339; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 269–270.

¹⁸ *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:302–303; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:588; Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 2:254; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 361, note, 381–382, 387, 391–392; Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 6:16–17, 83; *Tagebücher*, 2:316; *Aus Metternich's nachgelassenen Papieren*, edited by Richard Metternich-Winneburg and Alfons von Klinckowström (7 vols., Vienna, 1880–84), 3:194.

judgment of other keen observers that police regulations merely scraped the surface and missed the heart. Though certain police measures were inevitable, some sort of program to inculcate a different spirit in the universities especially deserved attention. As a means to this end, Gentz recommended to Metternich two suggestions of Adam Müller's: first, that a single individual should be made responsible for each university; second, that objectionable professors should be transferred to positions in the state where they could work no harm.¹⁹

Before Gentz and Müller had a chance to elaborate the above views to Metternich, Metternich decided to bring the German situation to the attention of a ministerial committee at Frankfurt, and instructions were sent to the Austrian representative in the Federal Diet. When, however, the committee at Frankfurt failed to agree quickly on what should be done, Metternich veered around to Gentz's idea that the matter should be taken up directly with the leading German courts.²⁰ First of all he brought the Prussians completely over to his side; then, with the stage carefully set, responsible leaders of the larger states assembled "accidentally" at Karlsbad early in August to concert on the instructions they should send to the diet. The famous decrees of Karlsbad were the outcome. In the weeks immediately preceding the meetings, Metternich and Gentz worked together to perfection. Metternich had great confidence in the counsel Gentz gave him. "Nothing must hinder you . . . from communicating your views to me. . . . I await your observations and even your attacks," he wrote.²¹

In June Gentz had made a summary of his correspondence with Adam Müller on the question of measures to be taken in regard to the universities. Though the two friends agreed that certain disciplinary measures should be taken, such as outlawry of the *Burschenschaften* and dismissal of the most objectionable professors, they thought the truly constructive work must be more subtle: "The precedence of the positive sciences over the philosophical and critical must be vindicated. Herein lies one of the best means of bringing back the preponderance of authority over false freedom; for anyone can philosophize and criticize (and mystify and poetize) as he pleases; but positive sciences have to be *learned*; and if the younger generation decides again for real learning, it will again become capable of an intellectual subordination with-

¹⁹ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 379, 388-392, 407, 409, 414-416, 419, 422; Fournier, "Gentz," in *Der Friede*, 3:489; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:578-579, 593, 776.

²⁰ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 408-410, 422, 426; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:589; Stern, *Geschichte Europas*, 1:562.

²¹ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 409, 471.

out which the entire academic life is only a prelude to the wild anarchy in which all political life today is revolving.”²²

At Karlsbad, however — where Gentz was as usual very active, drafting and redrafting proposals and conclusions, conferring, discussing — the main task was that of agreeing upon suitable police measures. The idea of a responsible curator for each university was adopted, the *Burschenschaften* were outlawed, and undesirable professors were to be dismissed and forbidden to accept positions in any university in the confederation. In his more meditative moments Gentz did not favor peremptory measures that would cause too much uproar. “In our negotiations here,” he confided to Pilat, “I am merely in agreement with the aim; in regard to the means, almost always in opposition.” The emphasis at Karlsbad conflicted with Gentz’s better judgment; but he was too thoroughly aroused to give cool reflection free play and allowed momentary reactions and prejudices to swing him toward that ultraism which he professed to scorn.²³

If the gentlemen of Karlsbad stressed the strong arm of authority in dealing with the universities, they acted consistently with the rest of their program, for on the question of the press they took a similar course. Metternich and Gentz had been considering the problem of censorship for some time, and they went to Karlsbad knowing what they wanted. On June 17 Metternich had outlined to Gentz the sort of press regulations he had in mind and asked for his reaction. Gentz, who viewed press freedom in Germany “as the first and greatest of *all* public evils,” went to work with a will and drew up the document which the Prussians assented to at Teplitz and which formed the basis for the press measure agreed upon at Karlsbad.²⁴

There are indications that in 1819 Gentz exerted a greater and more direct influence upon the course of events than at any previous time. Metternich obviously placed great confidence in his advice. And well he might, for Gentz was presumably a specialist in the manipulation of public opinion. Gentz himself was well satisfied with the results of Karlsbad: “I do not know whether I am fooling myself,” he wrote Bombelles on November 9, “but it seems to me that we have made great strides forward in the last two months. . . . It is the first time

²² *Ibid.*, 456–464.

²³ *Tagebücher*, 2:347–349; Stern, *Geschichte Europas*, 1:575; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:386, 387, 395, 403; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:426–427.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 431, 464–468; *Tagebücher*, 2:338; Stern, *Geschichte Europas*, 1:469–470, 574–575; H. von Zwiédineck-Südenhorst, *Deutsche Geschichte von der Auflösung des alten bis zur Errichtung des neuen Kaiserreiches* (3 vols., Stuttgart and Berlin, 1903), 2:64–65.

someone has attacked openly not some isolated point but the entire mass of bad principles. Few people, I believe, would have imagined that a stroke so vigorous would emanate from the cabinet at Vienna. The accession of the others is a miracle; and in general, the events at Karlsbad, although I have been an eyewitness of them, appear to me like a dream."²⁵

One does not need to judge Gentz from the standpoint of liberalism to arrive at the conclusion that his glory of 1819 had been purchased dearly. His performance appears somewhat discreditable, not because he had trampled recklessly on the sacred tenets of this or that political faith, but because he had weakly turned tail on his own convictions. His position was fundamentally false. His personal leanings were rationalistic, but he had scant trust in the thinking apparatus of mankind in general, and when, as in 1819, unreason seemed to him rampant, he could think of nothing better than to scuttle to religion and seek Divine sanction for his own opinion. He was never, it is true, unsympathetic toward religion, but, as he had explained to Adam Müller a few years before, he could not with intellectual honesty subscribe to *revealed* religion. In 1819, however, he felt in his desperation that revealed religion was something to which men *must* subscribe; without it the social order would go to pieces. Accompanying this shift toward the suprarational, a marked tendency toward obscurantism becomes evident in him. He publicly defended the Karlsbad press measure in these words: "In the last few years we have been so surfeited with political ideas and dreams that every rational man ought sincerely to think himself, his friends, and especially the leaders of states lucky, should it be possible, amid this wild and confused commotion, to find a short pause for meditation."²⁶

Some years before, in a moment of despair, Gentz had written: "There must be *belief* again, there must be *obedience* again, there must be a thousand times less *reasoning* than now, or there can no longer be *government*." It will be noted that he seems here to have underlined the wrong words: it was the "musts" that should have been scored. That at any rate, was the attitude with which, in 1819, he turned toward religion: we *must* have it, for as practical statesmen we know of nothing that can serve our purpose quite so well. "Religion has to be restored, if civil organization is to continue to exist," he wrote. "It is

²⁵ S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (31K) 95. The original and a copy of this letter are in the archives. The copy bears the date 1829; that on the original is unclear. Internal evidence, however, indicates that the letter was written in 1819. See *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:410-411.

²⁶ Eckardt, *Gentz: Staatsschriften und Briefe*, 2:80.

not a question here of how far *my* reason can be bound; but I know that no moral and therefore no political order in the world can exist, if means are not found to bind the reason of everyone, and if the fatal pretension, by virtue of which everybody wants to look upon his own reason as absolute, is not again banned in human society." He thus expressed his partial capitulation to the arguments of his friend Adam Müller. It is interesting to note that the "practical" Gentz here surrendered to the superior realism of the "impractical" Müller.²⁷

The receptivity of the Gentz of 1819 to the point of view of Müller—who significantly in that year brought out his *Von der Notwendigkeit einer theologischen Grundlage der gesamten Staatswissenschaften*—was shown in the attitude he took on the constitutional question. The thirteenth article of the Federal Act had from the outset been a burning question in the German Confederation. This article provided that "in all states of the Confederation a *landständische* constitution *will* be established." Even this modest sop to the liberals was thus merely projected for the indefinite future; but the pressure was so great that already in 1818 constitutions had been introduced in several states, notably in Baden, Bavaria, and Saxe-Weimar—the constitution in Saxe-Weimar being quite advanced for the times. The liberals demanded that Article XIII should be understood to call for "representative" constitutions. Conservatives wanted solely a uniform establishment of the ancient semifeudal machinery.²⁸ Gentz had given considerable attention to the question; and he had formulated an elaborate definition of the term *landständisch*.

Realizing that the German princes must go through the motions of granting their subjects some sort of constitution, he was anxious above all, that these constitutions should not lead to "the total weakening of the sovereign's authority, the rule of demagogues, and all sorts of revolutionary disorders." He saw nothing particularly obnoxious, for instance, in the constitution that had been instituted in Bavaria; but he

²⁷ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 104; Gentz to Pilat, [April], 1819, in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, August 13, 1898; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 275; *Tagebücher*, 2:319; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 3:208–213. Guglia, *Gentz*, 117–126, maintains that Gentz's enthusiasm for De Maistre probably exceeded his enthusiasm for Müller; but Gentz did not read *Du Pape* until 1820, and by that time he had long been exposed to Müller's ideas. When Gentz revised his diaries in 1826, he noted with surprise that he had dined with the much admired De Maistre in 1803, at the home of Arthur Paget, and he was at a loss to explain why such an event had failed to impress him. *Tagebücher*, 1:27–28. See also *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:428, 458; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 336.

²⁸ Stern, *Geschichte Europas*, 1:289, 592; Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 2:71; A. F. Pollard, "The Germanic Confederation, 1815–40," in *The Cambridge Modern History*, 10:346–363.

was shocked at the way the king had allowed the situation to get out of control, with the doctrine being openly proclaimed in debate that the legislative body was a "right of the nation," rather than a generous gift from the monarch.²⁹

It had been prearranged that conferences at Vienna should follow those at Karlsbad to complete the work of "strengthening the federative system of Germany." According to Metternich's original intention, a precise definition of the meaning of Article XIII was also to be formulated at the Vienna conferences. When, however, the king of Württemberg, on July 10, 1819, suddenly called the estates of his realm together, Metternich decided that quick action should be taken before the situation there likewise got out of hand. Accordingly, in the first days of August, Gentz drew up a memoir setting forth the Austrian position, a statement which formed the basis for the discussions at Karlsbad, particularly those between Metternich and Wintzingerode of Württemberg. This memoir was as conservative a document as Gentz ever wrote. Nowhere is it more clearly revealed that the events of 1819 had thrown him off his balance and that for the moment he could think of nothing better than to borrow the ideas of Adam Müller. After damning so-called "representative" constitutions as purely arbitrary creations that destroyed "civil order and subordination" and led to anarchy in small states, he launched into rhapsodic praise of *landständischen* constitutions. These rested not on any false and diabolical theories about equality before the law, but on "the fundamental elements of the state" . . . "those differences of class and rights established by God himself" . . . "the natural foundation of a well-ordered civil society." It was as members of a class that delegates participated in the government and were accorded such privileges as advising, assenting, and proposing; but never had they the right to trespass upon the position of the monarch as supreme lawgiver. *Landständische* constitutions and those alone were compatible with the nature of the confederation; and if the German princes did not unite in such an interpretation and execution of Article XIII the confederation must cease to exist.³⁰

At Karlsbad Wintzingerode was willing to be pleasant, but com-

²⁹ Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 94; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 1:423-424; Stern, "Eine Denkschrift von Gentz über die erste bayerische Ständeversammlung," in the *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 10:337.

³⁰ *Gentz aux hospodars*, 1:447; Stern, *Geschichte Europas*, 1:568-569, 577; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:596; Baxa, *Adam Müller*, 357-358. The memoir itself, bearing the title "Über den Unterschied zwischen den land-ständischen und Representativ-Verfassungen," is to be found in the second edition of Ludwig K. Aegide, *Aus dem Jahre 1819* (Hamburg, 1861), 98-116.

plete acceptance of the Gentz interpretation was too much. The whole matter was therefore postponed until the conference at Vienna.³¹ Little more was accomplished, however, at the second meeting. There was no difficulty in obtaining agreement to the principle that the monarch was absolute, but instead of an outright pronouncement for *landständische* constitutions, a vague declaration that the monarch could be restricted only in the exercise of certain rights was all that could be obtained. This actually left things as they were and was accordingly a victory of the South German states over Metternich; but there was no bitterness in the Austrian camp — at least so far as Gentz was concerned.³² The monarchial principle, he fondly thought, was for the time being safe in Germany.

³¹ Stern, *Geschichte Europas*, 1:579.

³² Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:596–598; Stern, *Geschichte Europas*, 1:619–620; *Tagebücher*, 2:373–375; Klinkowström, *Aus der alten Registratur*, 82.

17. Intervention on TríaI

CONTRARY TO Gentz's hopes the measures taken at Karlsbad and Vienna in 1819 and 1820 did not usher in a period of tranquillity. The German troubles were followed by a multitude of others. A revolution exploded in Spain. In France the Bourbon Duc de Berry was murdered, and the streets of Paris once again reverberated with the clamor of riots. In London the Royal Family put its dirty linen on display, and the Tories shuddered and wondered with some justification whether the monarchy would long survive. To cap the climax, the Neapolitan liberals engineered a *putsch*, and their king blithely gave his assent to a liberal constitution. "We have come to one of those fatal epochs when one cannot count on anything," Gentz announced tremulously.¹

Metternich wanted to handle the Neapolitan trouble alone, by virtue of a right to intervene in Naples implied by a treaty of June 12, 1815. But when he had to choose between the Russian proposal for another general congress to formulate a more effective common policy, and the English proposal for a conference of ambassadors at Vienna to stand watch over Austrian action in Naples, Metternich decided for the Russians and a congress.

The congress met late in October at Troppau, a small town of about seven thousand inhabitants, which was advantageously situated close to the borders of both Russia and Prussia. The citizens of the town had done all they could on short notice to make the place presentable. The houses had been freshly plastered, the streets were festooned with decorations, an arch of triumph made an exotic, if temporary, appearance, and crowds of curiosity seekers milled through the town.² The Austrian emperor, the czar, and the king of Prussia were present with sizable retinues, but the management of affairs devolved upon the

¹ *Gentz aux hospodars*, 2:67-71.

² Karl Knaflitsch, *Lokalgeschichtliches zum Troppauer Kongress, 1820* (Troppau, 1910).

little clique of experienced diplomats who had regulated the disposition of Europe at Vienna and Aachen. England and France, however — ominous sign! — were represented merely by onlookers who lacked full powers.

Metternich was the actual head of the congress, and Gentz served as his *alter ego* in a sense that was true at none of the earlier European gatherings. He was closeted with the foreign minister for hours every day; “never before,” he reported, “has the prince treated me with such unlimited confidence; I know his most secret thoughts.” The bulk of the time-consuming drafting and editing connected with the congress was entrusted as usual to him, and when he was not at his desk he conferred with members of the foreign delegations. Other Austrian diplomats of some importance, such as Count Zichy and Baron Lebzeltern, were present at Troppau, but there could be no doubt that Gentz was second in importance to Metternich.³

The leading figure outside the Austrian camp was Kapodistrias, who, despite the predictions and hopes of Gentz, retained the favor of Alexander. Kapodistrias’ favorite contention was that the maintenance of order could be made “compatible with the ascendancy of liberal ideas,” and he had come to Troppau with a program worthy of the daringly ingenious statesman that he was. Along with a general guarantee binding the powers to put down revolution, he wanted the Neapolitan government reformed “on the model of the French *Charte*” — the sort of reform, he remarked blandly, “which all enlightened men will approve most.” On November 6, to the horror and disgust of the Austrians, this program was put in the form of a definite proposal. Gentz wrote a detailed critique of it, but showed his work to no one but Lebzeltern.⁴

Metternich found himself in an unhappy position; the only way he could sabotage Neapolitan reform was to agree to the principle of general intervention. He was by no means unsympathetic to intervention, but he knew well that a general statement of policy on the matter would be anathema to the English and might well destroy the Concert. Nevertheless, in a preliminary protocol of November 19, which was signed by the three Eastern monarchies, the doctrine of intervention was affirmed in cases of revolutions “the results of which threaten other states.” This doctrine was used to justify Austrian intervention in Naples, and the protocol was submitted to England and France for approval. A

³ Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:604; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:444; Webster, *Castlereagh*, 2:285–286.

⁴ *Gentz aux hospodars*, 2:13; Webster, *Castlereagh*, 2:288, 525–526; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:198.

favorable reaction from England was not really expected, but as Gentz flatly told Lord Stewart, in a letter transmitted to Castlereagh, the Three Powers felt themselves "forced to act, and to act vigorously and promptly." If the European Alliance collapsed on this issue, it would not be the Three Powers that were to blame. Almost simultaneously an invitation went out for the king of the Two Sicilies to meet the Eastern monarchs at Laibach, where the congress was to reconvene at the beginning of the new year, to confer with them about conditions in his realm.⁵

Gentz, who looked upon Naples as merely "a subordinate question," did not want the men at Troppau to recline at ease while waiting for King Ferdinand to appear. In view of the grave dangers which he believed lurked all about, he wanted the congress to turn to "greater, more comprehensive questions." Metternich, as we have seen, had nothing of the sort in mind for Troppau; he wanted to confine himself to Naples alone, and only pressure from the Russians had brought him to the step of November 19. Gentz was at first content to let Metternich follow his chosen course, since it could work no harm. But once Kapodistrias had played his cards and forced the Austrians into a definite pronouncement on intervention, Gentz did not favor sitting back any longer with folded hands. After all, if the Western powers were to be antagonized, the declaration of November 19 would accomplish it. So why should Austria not take the offensive and find out which was the stronger, Alexander or Kapodistrias? Gentz accordingly obtained Metternich's consent for the drafting of a memoir in which he proposed that "legitimate sovereignty must be placed under the guarantee of the European powers by a general treaty in such a way, indeed, that every revolution brought about by usurped force would justify in itself intervention by the powers." In other words Gentz was willing to espouse intervention in *all* cases of revolution without any modifying stipulations. As he explained to Soutzo, the new hospodar, his proposal looked to "the maintenance of legal order and of the fundamental institutions upon which it rests in every European state."⁶

We have seen, in connection with the constitutional question in Germany, the sort of "fundamental institutions" Gentz had in mind; they left little room for Kapodistrias' "proper mixture of liberty and consti-

⁵ Charles K. Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh* (2d ed., London, 1934), 2:289-294, 598-599; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:604; Martens, *Recueil des traités conclus par la Russie*, 4:281-285; *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, 2:37-38.

⁶ *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:444, 454-455; Heinrich von Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, 3:167 (Leipzig, 1889); Stern, *Geschichte Europas*, 2:134-135; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 2:97-98.

tutional rights." Although Alexander received Gentz's proposal with "great applause," the matter was left up in the air at Troppau. Instead of going beyond the declaration of November 19, in fact, the Eastern powers felt impelled by English opposition to back up a little, and the declaration itself was not published; but its sense, in presumably milder form, was imparted in a confidential circular to the various diplomatic representatives of the Eastern powers.⁷

Castlereagh, however, refused to be mollified by half measures, and on January 19 he dispatched a circular of his own, in which he made it clear that England associated herself neither with the principle of intervention in general, nor with intervention in Naples in particular.⁸

Meanwhile the congress had moved nearer the Italian border to Laibach, and was taking up the next stage of the Neapolitan question. At first there was nothing except the somewhat more attractive environment to mark Laibach as distinct from Troppau. The personnel of the leading actors was about the same, the situation at Naples and the attitude of England remained the problems of prime importance, and Gentz's friendly feud with Kapodistrias continued to engross him.

Kapodistrias still wanted to maneuver affairs in such a way that some constitutional reforms would be brought about in the Two Sicilies, but the radicals there had played into the hands of the Austrians. Instead of satisfying themselves with a promise from their king to support a liberal constitution, they had made him specify the Spanish Constitution of 1812. That was too much for even Kapodistrias.⁹

Kapodistrias did not give up at once, however. After the spineless king of Naples and the obtuse Ruffo, his minister, had appeared at Laibach, Gentz had drawn up a letter, purporting to be from the king to his son. The letter stated simply that the king was returning with Austrian troops at his back, and explained what must be done if war was to be avoided. That did not fit in with the ideas of Kapodistrias, who had planned an elaborate imaginary correspondence and who thought, besides, that the king should be accompanied by certain ministers of the powers. Presumably these ministers were to strengthen the king's position, but actually, according to Gentz, it was Kapodistrias' idea that they should "cabal with all parties."¹⁰

⁷ Webster, *Castlereagh*, 2:306, 526; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:198; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 2:114-116.

⁸ Webster, *Castlereagh*, 2:320-321.

⁹ *Gentz aux hospodars*, 2:101-110.

¹⁰ Gentz to Pilat, Laibach, January 17, 1821, S.A., Vienna, Nachlass Gentz, 23. In this letter, which is marked "confidential and most secret," Gentz speaks of the letter that had been composed as though from the king of Naples to his son, in which the king merely

Despite the fact that his desires for Naples were similar to those of England and France, Kapodistrias could not withstand the purposeful assault of the Austrians, who at last had Alexander safely in tow. Metternich's Neapolitan policy went through. "Really," Gentz announced to Pilat on February 1, 1821, "things are not going badly. The retrogressive movement of revolution as a whole (from the time of the Karlsbad conferences, as all friends today heartily agree) is so evident to me that even the outbreaks in Spain, Portugal, and Naples can no longer disturb me in my opinion." Gentz made this statement regardless of the aloof position taken by England, who declined to sign any *procès-verbal* having to do with the Neapolitan question. Gentz appears to have been rather indifferent at this particular time about the attitude of England: he had, for example opposed the decision to substitute a journal signed merely by the secretary general of the conferences (himself) for the usual protocol—he did not think the situation warranted the subterfuge resorted to at Troppau to make the world think that the Concert still functioned in perfect harmony.¹¹

By the latter part of February everything seemed to be done, and the diplomats waited at Laibach only to learn definitely the successful outcome of the elaborate military expedition. "It seems to me . . . our whole position is unassailable . . . and I think Troppau and Laibach should some day be mentioned with great honor," declared Gentz in a tone of satisfied finality. He fell into a restfully self-appreciative mood and pondered his "true virtuosity" at translating diplomatic notes.¹²

informed his son that an army of occupation was coming. The letter, Gentz says, "does not speak of the Spanish Constitution. . . . It merely *relates* what the cabinets have told him [the king of the Two Sicilies]; and without touching upon any other question it states what must be done (in accordance with the irrevocable will of the sovereigns) to avoid war. On the very next day after my arrival I worked secretly for four hours with Ruffo, in order to forge this letter with the greatest possible circumspection and wisdom. The evil genius does not sleep. Kapodistrias had thought out another plan, according to which an arranged, simulated correspondence should be opened, and from this should emerge the letter of the king (which he moreover reserves for editing himself). At the same time he wanted to send ministers to Naples on the pretext of giving more force to the action of the king, but actually to cabal there with all parties. . . . Kapodistrias has *edited* the whole simulated correspondence, and it is now our sad task to attack this absurd work, piece by piece. He is *alone* in his opinion; both of his colleagues are silent, or defend him at most merely in courtesy. . . . Kapodistrias has stipulated that neither in the correspondence nor in the king's letter should there be any mention of the *army of occupation*; it should merely be: submission or war! And when they answer *submission*—then for the first time (that is, about a week later!!) the king should announce to them that he is coming with an army of occupation, although no one in Naples is ignorant of the fact that at Troppau and here this is one of the conditions first mentioned."

¹¹ *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:13-14, 17, 20, 28; Zwiedineck-Südenhorst, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 2:95; *Tagebücher*, 2:384-385; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 2:128-129; William P. Cresson, *The Holy Alliance: The European Background of the Monroe Doctrine* (New York, 1922), 101.

¹² Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:179-180; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:30, 33, 39.

Unfortunately this siestalike repose lasted no time at all. First came the revolt in Piedmont, then the Greek uprising, and in the midst of it all, the parliamentary debates in England, which frightened him "more than all the revolutions in Italy." It seemed as if "England adhered already to an entirely different political and moral order of the world." He could think of but one remedy — to gird the loins and press forward with even greater vigor and resolution. "Revolution must be fought with flesh and blood," he said. "Moral weapons are manifestly powerless. . . . With cannons and Cossacks on the one side, and firebrands and volunteers on the other, both systems must in the end fight a life-and-death struggle, and to him who remains standing belongs the world. Czar Alexander has comprehended that, and so have we." He said further: "With *justice* and *wisdom*, we must appear formidable. Since in all parts of Europe the dogs have so mistaken, so calumniated, so abused our pure intentions, our firm but consequent and mild course, they will have to *tremble* a few years at the names of the allied sovereigns." Gentz noted with pride that after a few weeks at Laibach the Frenchman Jouffroy admitted that he was beginning to understand the meaning of "practical politics."¹³

Practical politics seemed, in fact, to be in the ascendant. The Russians had expressed every willingness to throw eighty thousand troops into Piedmont, but Austria easily got the situation in hand alone. Alexander had shown a surprising lack of sympathy for the Greek uprising, and even Castlereagh let it be known privately that the crushing of revolutions was not displeasing to him. "God fights for us and with us," was Gentz's devout comment. As the congress neared its close, it seemed to him that in the past seven months the heights of statesmanship had been scaled, and although he had been called to fill only a "subordinate role," he regarded Laibach as the crown of his diplomatic career.¹⁴

He still had his ability to detect the possibility of a gift from even the most unlikely quarters. Thus his services at Troppau and Laibach brought not merely the customary windfalls from Russia, England, and even from his own emperor, but a largess of three thousand ducats from the king of the Two Sicilies. He sought to extract a less magnificent sum from the king of Sardinia through the intercession of General Bubna, commander of the Austrian army of occupation, but the result of this effort is not known. Thus intervention served not

¹³ *Tagebücher*, 2:396; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:43, 47-48, 50-51, 71.

¹⁴ Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:182, 264; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:56, 76-77; Klinkowström, *Aus der alten Registratur*, 90.

merely as a bulwark of legitimacy, but as a support to the Gentz exchequer as well.

The Congress of Laibach represented Austrian success at its peak: central Europe was brought safely through the storms of 1820, and the semblance of a concert still remained, although "the defection of England from the European community was as good as decided." But at the extremities of Europe — on the Iberian Peninsula and in Greece — the revolutionary flames remained unquenched. In recognition of this fact the powers, before they left Laibach, agreed to hold another congress at Verona in the fall of the following year.¹⁵

When the Congress of Verona met in due course, the situation was quite different from what it had been at Laibach. English foreign policy was in the hands of Canning, and he embraced with a will policies that Castlereagh could espouse only with the greatest reluctance; they were not policies that would bolster the tottering "Confederation of Europe." Tendencies among the other Great Powers, however, were more satisfactory from the Austrian point of view. Kapodistrias had been finally removed from his position of influence in Russia, and the czar was more than ever convinced of the necessity for united action against revolution everywhere. In France the ultras had climbed into the saddle, with Villèle, Montmorency, and Chateaubriand directing the conduct of affairs. The trend in Prussia also was toward the right.

The personnel of the delegations at Verona reflected these changes. Outside the ranks of royalty, Metternich, Gentz, and Nesselrode were the foremost veterans of such gatherings. Wellington, who represented England, was of course well known in diplomatic as in military circles, but no Englishman seemed a part of the confederation group in the sense that Castlereagh had been. Strangford, British ambassador at Constantinople, was in attendance, and it was this diplomat, rather than celebrities like Wellington and Chateaubriand, who impressed Gentz.¹⁶

The negotiations at Verona resolved themselves predominantly around Spain, and Gentz did not care especially about Spain. Villèle, then chief minister in France, favored forceful representations, not armed intervention, in Spain. In these views Villèle approached the standpoint of Metternich, but with this difference: the French minister wanted France to act alone, whereas Metternich wanted joint steps by all the allied powers. Villèle was badly served at Verona, however, first by Montmorency and then by Chateaubriand, who were deter-

¹⁵ *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 340; *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, 2:42.

¹⁶ *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:86, 91.

mined to do something spectacular for the pitiable Bourbons across the Pyrenees and wanted the sanction of the powers for French military action. England was of no mind to associate herself with such a project. Alexander, on the other hand, burned with zeal to march Russian troops into Spain: Cossacks in Andalusia appealed to his fancy.¹⁷

It was Metternich's hope to bring the discordant notes of the various powers into sweet harmony; and he was willing to change his own tune, if Wellington, Alexander, and Chateaubriand could thereby be persuaded to pipe in concert. In the end this hope was not realized. Austria, Prussia, and Russia, taken in tow by the French extremists, sanctioned French intervention in Spain. Wellington, however, was instructed not to associate England with this enterprise, and the break in the European Concert was now plainly revealed.¹⁸

The relations between Metternich and Gentz were exceptionally close at Verona; Gentz noted at the end of the congress that he had rarely gone out save to see his chief, who lived about a hundred paces away. The most important Austrian state papers were all written by Gentz, and there is no evidence to indicate that he disagreed in any respect with Metternich's policy.¹⁹ He developed no special policy of his own at Verona; his role was simply that of a valuable and valued co-worker. Since he had not expected much from the congress, its rather negative results, from the Austrian point of view, did not worry him. The consideration given him, as a seasoned veteran of congresses, the way in which a Chateaubriand courted his esteem — these things made of Verona a personal triumph. He was in high good humor. "Gods holds his hand over Austria," he told Pilat confidently. "As long as the emperor and Prince Metternich live, no storm will convulse us."²⁰

Gentz's hopeful prophecy of "peace in our time" came true, in part. Neither he nor the emperor, at least, lived to see Austria convulsed with storms, though Metternich was not so fortunate. But the years that immediately succeeded the Congress of Verona were full of unrest, and the signs of the times were not encouraging to those who venerated

¹⁷ Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:614-616; Emmanuel Beau de Loménie, *La Carrière politique de Chateaubriand de 1815 à 1830* (2 vols., Paris, 1929), 2:28, 36.

¹⁸ *Tagebücher*, 3:111.

¹⁹ *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:120; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 366-367; *Tagebücher*, 3:96, 101-102, 108-109, 119; Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:273; Stern, *Geschichte Europas*, 2:292-293, 295; Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere*, 3:578-586.

²⁰ *Tagebücher*, 3:97; Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere*, 3:527-528; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:177, 362-367; 5:321; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 368-369; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:123.

monarchical institutions or who believed in the mission of states which, like Austria, "violated" the principle of nationality. Events in Latin America and in Greece widened the breach in the Concert which had been revealed at Verona, and agitation for a liberalization of political institutions in Germany continued unabated. In the seven years that followed the Congress of Verona these three issues—Latin America, Greece, and Germany—occupied Gentz's attention simultaneously. Latin America did not affect Austria's vital interests as did the events in Germany and the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless Austrian policy in regard to Latin America is not without interest, if for no other reason than that the policy is so frequently misunderstood.

Since Metternich is popularly regarded as the heart and soul of the Conservative Alliance, it is often assumed by the half-informed that Austria headed every attempt, or suggestion of an attempt, to repress revolution anywhere. Actually, the Austrian attitude revealed at Verona was typical of her policy: On questions that did not pertain to middle Europe, the Vienna government did not take the initiative in urging armed intervention; and although Gentz had affirmed that "every revolution brought about by usurped force would justify in itself intervention by the powers," he preferred that intervention should be diluted into mild diplomatic pressure in places like Spain, where Austrian interests were only remotely affected. When the French insisted on armed action in Spain, therefore, the Austrians made the best of it. Thus the whole doctrine of intervention was conceived realistically and was tempered by consideration of Austrian interests.

The question of Latin American independence reveals even more clearly Austria's realistic interpretation of the doctrine of intervention, and Gentz, whose opinion was sought at every step of the way, was largely responsible for Austria's attitude. The problem arose soon after the Congress of Vienna, when the Spanish colonies, having cut loose from the Bonapartist regime of Joseph, displayed unwillingness to renew their allegiance to the mother country. The English, who had fought so valiantly in the name of the Bourbons in Spain, could not with decency deny the political rights of Spain in South America. But the English had benefited greatly by the opportunities for South American trade opened up by the removal of the Spanish monopoly during the Napoleonic wars, and they were determined to retain their increased commerce. The reactionary and shortsighted Spanish government refused to give England the assurances she demanded, and in 1817 rumors grew persistent that Russia, in exchange for Minorca, had agreed

to help Spain re-establish her position in South America. There had never been a question of Austrian participation in such a deal; Gentz, indeed, had reported that if the rumors should prove to be well founded they would only serve to unite Austria and Prussia with England against St. Petersburg.²¹

Castlereagh quickly showed his ability to handle the situation alone. On August 28, 1817, he proclaimed England's opposition to armed intervention in South America by any power other than Spain.²² The significance to the colonies of this declaration was not altogether apparent at the time, and it speaks well for Gentz's perspicacity that he at once saw the situation in its true light. He was quite aware of the commanding position that England's navy gave her in determining the fate of Latin America. Thus by January of 1818 Gentz was ready to admit the loss of Spain's colonies in Latin America, save possibly Mexico and Peru, which might be salvaged if "an enlightened and liberal system" were immediately adopted. Ferdinand VII's government was anything but receptive to new ideas, however, as Gentz very well knew, and a few months later he again pronounced "the greater part of America . . . lost to Spain."²³

The next six years saw the Spanish forces defeated in even their last stronghold, Peru; Spain and Portugal were beset by internal revolutions; and Brazil joined the Spanish colonies in proclaiming the ties with Europe severed. Gentz continued to watch events from the corner of his eye. He found time between the round of congresses and routine labors to keep informed, by reading not merely the official dispatches, but an impressive variety of books on both South and North America.²⁴ Having convinced himself that little could be done to change the course of events in the Western Hemisphere, he was content to sit by and allow the situation to mature. After all, neither his nor Austria's ox was being gored.

The United States in June, 1822, formally recognized Colombia, but the problem of recognition did not begin to agitate the Continental cabinets seriously until the latter part of 1823. By that time the French had successfully subdued the revolutionaries in Spain, and there were fears, unfounded in fact, that French aid would be extended to the Spanish in South America. Actually, "the French Government . . . fully un-

²¹ *Gentz aux hospodars*, 1:296-299.

²² Charles K. Webster, ed., *Britain and the Independence of Latin America, 1812-1830* (2 vols., London, 1938), 1:14.

²³ Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 5:292-295; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:299-300.

²⁴ *Tagebücher*, 2:210, 258, 354, 357.

derstood that the independence of the Spanish colonies was inevitable," and by November they were beginning to talk of a congress as "the best means of offering the joint mediation of the European Powers for the settlement of the dispute between Spain and the colonies." "If the prejudices of the Court of Spain should prevent the success of the negotiations," the French reasoned, "it will be a satisfactory reflection that the Allied Powers have paid the tribute which is due to Legitimacy by the attempt to ensure the settlement of the differences between Spain and the Colonies, and . . . each Government will be at liberty to pursue the course which their particular situation and the interests of their subjects appear to require."²⁵ This was handsomely said, and if the French government had not been too lofty to take the United States into its confidence, President Monroe might have softened his famous retort.

As it was, the Monroe Doctrine was enunciated. It made considerable impression in Vienna, and particularly on Friedrich Gentz. Of the European conservatives Gentz alone realized the full significance of the message. That is not surprising, in view of the fact that he knew far more about America than did the vast majority of his contemporaries and was equipped with an imagination capable of grasping the vast future of the United States. Writing to Pilat in 1818 he had said: "The progressive extension of the territory of the United States is in my opinion the greatest political fact of our time; here lies concealed the seed for events that will entirely change the face of the world not in a hundred, but in twenty years." Consequently, although the president's address struck him as a piece of "unparalleled impudence," he admitted that the speech would be "epoch-making in the history of our time. Every line of it," he continued, "deserves to be weighed with the most serious attention."²⁶

Gentz himself was among the first to weigh Monroe's words with serious attention. In a memoir bearing the date January 13, 1824, he set forth his views. After a preliminary admonition, to the effect that the "transatlantic colossus" presented a moral threat to the conservative foundations of Europe which must constantly be taken into consideration, there creeps into Gentz's discourse a tone of satisfaction over the fact that Monroe had brought the issue into the clear. It had long been manifest to Gentz, and he now assumed that it must be manifest to

²⁵ Webster, *Britain and Latin America*, 1:19; 2:127.

²⁶ Dexter Perkins, *The Monroe Doctrine, 1823-1826* (Cambridge, 1932), 170; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:300; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 85-86; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 5:102.

everyone concerned, that Spain could not win back her colonies herself, and that no one else was going to give her the necessary assistance to do so. The time was therefore ripe, he went on, for a ministerial conference of the European powers to begin negotiations with Spain and Portugal, looking to a dignified acknowledgment of the independence of the Latin American states. This idea of ministerial conferences was one that Metternich had already suggested in preference to the French and Russian idea of a congress. On December 26, 1823, Metternich had written: "Before talking about congresses, it is necessary to come to an accord on many matters, and the way to do this is through simple conferences." Gentz thus indicated his assent to a procedure which had doubtless already been agreed upon in the daily confabulations at the Ballplatz, and which was consistent with the Austrian view that there was no hurry, that the Spanish and Portuguese governments might be gently nudged and prodded and persuaded, without public uproar, to take the hated step.²⁷

According to Gentz the best solution, and the solution most likely to win Iberian approval, was to get cadet lines of the Houses of Bourbon and Braganza established in the states of the new world. Gentz had to admit, however, that any hopes based on the possibility of Bourbon states in Spanish America would be illusory. To make an honorable retreat, therefore, Spain should be satisfied to secure the "financial equivalent for the loss of her sovereign rights." Brazil presented a different problem; she had already declared herself an independent empire under Pedro, son of Portugal's king. "If the court of Portugal would pay attention to its reason and to its true interests," Gentz declared, "it would recognize immediately the complete independence of Brazil." This was no new idea on Gentz's part. When Canning in the preceding August had suggested an elaborate plan for a personal union between Portugal and Brazil, with sovereigns residing alternately in Lisbon and Rio, Gentz had dubbed the whole idea fantastic. With his keen sense of reality he had pointed out that the sensible solution called for a complete separation of the two countries: "Should the line of the House of Braganza ruling in Portugal become extinct, a prince of the Brazilian line and his heirs should mount the throne of Portugal; should the Brazilian line become extinct, a prince of the Portuguese line and his heirs should mount the throne of Brazil. This stipulation ought to be set forth as the fundamental law of both states in a perpetual treaty between Portugal and Brazil, and where possible,

²⁷ Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 5:102-106; Perkins, *Monroe Doctrine*, 138.

it ought to be guaranteed by the various European great powers.”²⁸ This statement he embodied in a memoir.

Gentz's analysis of the South American situation was masterly. His views found acceptance, furthermore, among the responsible directors of Austrian policy. Why, then, did the Vienna government not press its views upon Madrid and Lisbon? The answer is that no Austrian interest was vitally affected; Austria could therefore afford to maintain an attitude of the most correct consideration for the legal rights of the Iberian governments in Latin America. The position of the Austrian emperor had been made clear in 1822, when in his name Metternich had stated: “Invariably faithful to the great principles on which the social order and the maintenance of legitimate government depend, his Imperial Majesty will never recognize the independence of the Spanish American provinces, so long as His Catholic Majesty has not freely and formally renounced the sovereign rights that he has heretofore exercised over those provinces.” Gentz, who knew his legitimist doctrine, could not but acquiesce. As a *Realpolitiker* he might complain that the kings of Spain and Portugal were fools not to face facts, but as a legitimist he could not admit the right of Austria, or of any other government, to do anything drastic about it. Mild persuasion through ministerial conferences was the most obviously decent procedure under the circumstances. Consequently it was with his full approval that Metternich, on January 27, 1824, proposed that the ministerial conference at Paris (which since 1815 had met intermittently to deal with a variety of problems) should be resumed to deal “with all questions of ‘major importance.’”²⁹

Metternich's hopes for the success of the conferences were blasted by Canning, who “wished recognition to be a British, not a European action.” England refused to participate, and Canning, on January 30, 1824, “announced that the independence of the Spanish colonies had been achieved and that recognition must follow.”³⁰

Gentz was irked by this latest example of England's unwillingness to work out her policy in concert with the Continental powers. In a memoir of March 5 he went to particular pains to criticize the passage

²⁸ S.A., Vienna, Interiora, 105. The memoir is in Gentz's hand, is undated, and bears the title “Successions Bestimmung.” Since the British proposal referred to is that set forth by Canning on August 5, 1823 (Webster, *Britain and Latin America*, 1:226), the memoir was probably written toward the latter part of the year.

²⁹ Perkins, *Monroe Doctrine*, 138, note; H. W. V. Temperley, “Canning and the Conferences of the Four Allied Governments at Paris, 1823-1826,” in the *American Historical Review*, 30 (1924):22, 34.

³⁰ Webster, *Britain and Latin America*, 1:21, 22.

in the English declaration in which Canning had said: "The British government have no desire to anticipate Spain in . . . recognition. . . . But the Court of Madrid must be aware that the discretion of His Majesty in this respect cannot be indefinitely bound up by that of His Catholick Majesty, and that even before many months elapse, the desire now sincerely felt by the British Government to leave this precedence to Spain may be overborne by considerations of a more comprehensive nature." England had no right in international law, Gentz argued, to force the hand of the king of Spain. If the king of Spain had the right to win back the colonies, as Canning admitted, that right was perpetual, unless he renounced it of his own free will.³¹

Having thus given voice to his legitimism, Gentz soon returned to the field of the practical. The ambassadorial conferences in Paris had convened, but Austrian views, which actually favored recognition of Latin American independence, did not prevail. Both the czar and his energetic ambassador at Paris, Pozzo di Borgo, were still obsessed with the idea of contriving somehow to strike a blow for legitimacy in the New World. Gentz was frankly critical of the czar's new-found ultraism, and when the possibility was mentioned of recognizing the independence of most of the erstwhile colonies, but of winning back part of them, preferably Mexico and Peru, he threw cold water on the whole project. In a memoir of May 20, 1824, he pointed out that England's refusal to cooperate with the Continental powers was decisive. Henceforth people who played with such ideas "fooled the Spanish government and fooled themselves." This was good sense, but Gentz's counsels did not prevail. The Austrian ambassador at Paris joined his colleagues in solemnly recommending that Spain "do her best to reconquer her revolted American provinces, indicating Mexico as the most likely object of attack."³²

With that, Gentz washed his hands of South America. Austria, desirous always to work in close harmony with Russia, had been led down a blind alley, and the Spanish king, instead of being encouraged, as Gentz desired, to face unpleasant facts, had been urged to continue adamant. From the beginning Gentz's advice on Latin America had

³¹ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 86-91; Webster, *Britain and Latin America*, 2:414.

³² Perkins, *Monroe Doctrine*, 228-230; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 2:308-309; "Observations sur un point important dans l'affaire des colonies espagnoles de l'Amerique," [May 20, 1824], S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105. The dating of this memoir is clear from Gentz's *Tagebücher*, 3:306. Temperley, "Canning and the Conferences," in the *American Historical Review*, 30:25.

been clear-sighted, intelligent, statesmanlike. If Austrian policy did not display those qualities consistently, it was not his fault.³³

³³ "Nowhere," says Professor Perkins, "was there better or fuller information on the actual state of affairs in the New World than in the Austrian archives, nowhere a less biased interpretation of events taking place across the Atlantic. This may have been due, in part, to the intimate contact between the Austrian and British governments, at least during the foreign ministry of Castlereagh. But it was due, too, no doubt to . . . Friedrich von Gentz." *Monroe Doctrine*, 135-136. A memoir dated April 23, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105, deals with Brazil. Internal evidence indicates that it stems from the year 1825. It adds nothing substantially new to our knowledge of Gentz's attitude toward the Brazilian question.

18. The Eastern Question, 1821-1822

GENTZ'S INFLUENCE on Austrian policy during the decade 1818 to 1828 was by no means limited to the Latin American problem. Quite as substantial was his contribution to the conduct of Austrian policy during the long European crisis precipitated by the revolt of the Greeks in 1821. His diary contains such notations as: "The two of us [Metternich and Gentz] are directing Russo-Turkish affairs quite by ourselves"; and, "The prince has given over to me the most important part of the Turkish work." To his old friend Brinckmann Gentz wrote in 1824: "I am deeply involved in great affairs. For some years the prince has placed unqualified trust in me. It has become customary — I might almost say necessary — for him to talk over all important matters with me. . . . In addition I have made a particular *study* of *one* great question — the Turko-Grecian — and it is certainly not the easiest or the most pleasant. For four years I have expended much energy in trying to become accurately and thoroughly acquainted with this subject in all its branches — historical, political, and diplomatic."¹

Gentz used the words "accurate" and "thorough" advisedly; he was German and knew what they meant. He not only read and digested the works of Hammer, Schloezer, Thornton, and other writers on the East, but took time to make copious jottings. "I must tell you that my favorite subjects at the present time are the history and geography of the East," he wrote in 1821. "A book like the newly published journey of Jaubert to Persia keeps me awake until four o'clock in the morning."² Gentz has been credited with an expert knowledge of American

¹ *Tagebücher*, 3:26, 195; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:340. Similarly Lord Cowley, British ambassador at Vienna, reported to Canning on September 22, 1822: "The person . . . most in the confidence of Prince Metternich is Monsieur de Gentz. No step of importance is taken by the Austrian minister without consulting this gentleman." *The Diary and Correspondence of Henry Wellesley, First Lord Cowley, 1790-1846*, edited by F. A. Wellesley (London, 1930), 105-106.

² *Tagebücher*, 2:26, 27, 41, 427-428; 3:226; 4:281; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 357.

affairs, but this must not obscure the fact that he was much better informed on the Eastern Question.

The reliance which Metternich was widely known to place on Gentz's counsel gave rise to the belief that Gentz exerted more influence than was probably the case. Stratford Canning, upon the occasion of his visit to Vienna in 1824, referred in a letter to George Canning to "three puissant personages who, as you well know, are all in all within the limits of this Empire." These three personages whom George Canning supposedly knew as all-powerful were the emperor, Metternich, and Gentz! It is well to remember, however, that a reputation of unlimited power, however much it would have gratified Gentz's thirsty vanity, would have been dangerous to one in his position. An adviser without responsibility, he was obliged to have a "passion for anonymity" and to cater to the vanity of other people. Gentz knew enough of the world to be fully aware of this, and as early as 1822 he felt it necessary to disavow the impression that his was the directing hand behind Austria's Eastern policy. "Nothing is so highly wrong as this supposition that I 'exclusively direct the more important Oriental affairs,'" he wrote to one of his critics. "My accidental cooperation in this business has limited itself merely to the following two points: First, His Highness, the Prince has delegated me upon various occasions to draw up, in accordance with his specific verbal instructions, certain papers having to do with Turkish questions. Secondly, the prince has thought well to entrust to me the composition of the articles for the *Beobachter*. . . . Hereupon I have based the vain presumption that *I* directed Turkish affairs!" Gentz then proceeds to poke fun at the supposition that "under a minister like ours" anyone could even "help direct" policy.³

In the circumstances these were undoubtedly the right things for Gentz to say, but the evidence indicating that his participation in the conduct of affairs was by no means a wholly subservient one is too overwhelming to justify taking this letter at its face value. On the other hand, to assess Gentz's influence with exactitude, it would be necessary to know what went on during those daily conferences when Metternich gave him his "specific verbal instructions." And that can never be known. The evidence is sufficient, however, to justify the modest generalization that Gentz's influence on Austria's Eastern policy was great.

From the point of view of the legal issues involved, the Greek revolt was similar to the Latin American revolution. Subjects had taken arms

³ Stanley Lane-Poole, *Life of the Right Honourable Stratford Canning, Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe* (2 vols., London, 1888), 1:351, 353; Gentz to [?], December 4, 1822, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (31K) 95.

against their legitimate masters, and in such cases the subjects were always legally wrong. The Latin American question, however, showed clearly that though the Vienna statesmen talked legitimist apologetics continually, they acted according to the dictates of Austrian interests. In Latin America Austrian interests were only remotely involved, and Vienna showed real willingness to accept facts that were repugnant to legitimist sentiments. The Greek revolt was a different story. Austria was vitally interested, and so was Gentz, both as an Austrian and as an individual. At the very first news of the Greek outbreak he had howled, and with truth, that his "entire economic existence" was threatened.⁴

Since 1812, when Gentz had begun to make his famous reports to the hospodars of Wallachia, his revenue from the Danubian Principalities had come to form the most important single source of his income. When his original patron, Caragea, found it wise to flee his country in 1818, Gentz was able not merely to renew the Wallachian connection, but to widen it, and in 1821 he was in the pay of the hospodars of both Wallachia and Moldavia. He enjoyed great prestige in the Principalities, and justly so, for there was scant exaggeration in his boast to Caragea that his regular reports contained more exact information than that received by any great power from its ambassador at Vienna. In his independent way, Gentz took care that all his dispatches should not be censored by the omnipresent Austrian police, and he had established a dependable and confidential line of communication from Vienna to Bucharest.⁵

For all Gentz's pains the Phanariot Greek hospodars were hard to keep on the Austrian reservation. At the time of the Vienna Congress Caragea's agent, Bellio, had been ejected from the city on the suspicion that he was furnishing the Russians with confidential information gleaned from Gentz's dispatches. After 1815 Russia harbored and gave positions of distinction to Greeks high in the councils of the revolutionary society *Philike Hetairia*, and in the Principalities the Russian consul general, Pini, enjoyed increasing prestige. The hospodars and other importantly placed Greeks were suspected of Russian sympathies and revolutionary plans; and Mavrocordato, the nephew of Caragea and later a leader of the Greek revolt, gave a foretaste of what was coming when in 1820, through Caragea, he addressed a memoir to some of the European courts in which he pictured the approaching dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. A proposal to connect the Danubian Prin-

⁴ *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:48-49.

⁵ Fournier, "Gentz und das Kabinett," in the *Deutsche Revue*, 2:73-74; Sweet, *Gentz and the Danubian Principalities*, 4-10.

cialities and Serbia with Austria was designed to make the idea palatable to the Habsburg court. But Austria, sensing rightly that disintegration in Turkey might very conceivably spread within her own borders, was committed to the status quo in the Near East, and Gentz, who had argued that the development of Hungary and the south Slav provinces was enough to keep Austria's hands full, was in hearty agreement with the policy of his government. Nevertheless, knowing full well where his bread was buttered, he maintained an indulgent attitude toward the vagaries of his Greek admirers and paymasters. It is doubtful whether he really perceived the seriousness of what was impending.

The Greek patriots had grandiose plans. They intended nothing less than to supplant the wobbly Ottoman Empire with a new Byzantium. Consistent with this great project was the idea of raising the standard of revolt first in the Danubian Principalities. From there, it was thought, the revolt would rapidly spread through the whole Balkan Peninsula. In Wallachia, the poisoning of Gentz's patron, who had become enmeshed in a tangle of intrigue, provided the signal for the outbreak. This was in January, 1821, and by March Gentz had awakened to the realization that what was happening in the Principalities was "no joke," but part of "a general Greek revolt."

The Greeks, however, had missed the psychological moment to bring their larger plans to fruition. Alexander had been painfully impressed by the revolutions in Italy and in Spain. He was at Laibach in the company of his legitimist friends from Vienna when the news of the Greek revolt reached him, and he reacted in a fashion completely satisfying to conservatives of the Metternich persuasion. The aid from Russia which the revolutionists had expected failed to materialize. Furthermore the Rumanian natives evidenced the fact that, if anything, they hated the Greeks more than the Turks. The revolt in the Principalities petered out, and if the mountaineers of the Greek Peninsula had not taken matters into their own hands, no Greek question would have plagued the diplomats of Europe for the next decade.

When he returned to Russia, Alexander began to waver in the fine resolutions he had made at Laibach. The Russian diplomatic and consular service was honeycombed with Greeks and violently Turkophobe Russians who were incapable of adjusting themselves to conservative policy. Turkish atrocities provided grist for their mill, and with that patriotic Greek, Kapodistrias, still whispering in the czar's ear, Russo-Turkish relations soon came to a crisis. In June the Russian ambassador

stopped communicating officially with the Porte, and in August he sailed away for the great north.⁶

The news of the Russian action made a very painful impression at Vienna. Gentz, undoubtedly suspecting the sinister influence of Kapodistrias over the czar, wrote immediately to Nesselrode in the obvious, though unexpressed, hope that the ever pliant foreign minister would show some backbone and counteract the machinations of the Greek party at St. Petersburg. "The Greek insurrection," Gentz pointed out, "is above all deplorable at a time when it tends to take away a part of the fruits of our great and splendid Laibach accomplishments." He conceded that "the cruel fanaticism, the stupidity, and the blindness of the Turks had made almost desperate a problem that . . . has always presented immense difficulties," but he felt that Alexander's past conduct was a "pledge for the future," and that the Concert would weather even this storm. It was up to Russia and Austria to settle the matter, he concluded, for no real help was to be expected from either England or France.⁷

These sentiments were coolly received at St. Petersburg. The Russians were busy looking for someone to support them in an adventurous Eastern policy. When it became evident that no help was to be found for such a project, the peace party was able to reassert its influence over Alexander, and the negotiations were led into less dangerous channels.⁸

The Russian attitude toward the Greek revolt was complicated by the fact that the Turks had stubbornly refused to carry out the terms of the Treaty of Bucharest (1812), which had concluded the last Russo-Turkish war; and "the enigmatic attitude of the Emperor Alexander toward this refusal" had long been "perilous to the world's peace."⁹ The Greek revolt provided the czar with an opportunity to be less enigmatic; the unfulfilled terms of the Treaty of Bucharest gave him a good excuse to complain about conditions generally in the Turkish Empire.

In the first months of 1822 the Austrians were willing to admit that the sometimes nebulous terminology of the Treaty of Bucharest lent

⁶ Anton Count Prokesch von Osten, *Geschichte des Abfalls der Griechen vom Türkischen Reiche im Jahre 1821 und der Gründung des Hellenischen Königreiches* (6 vols., Vienna, 1867), 3:58-59; Theodor Schiemann, *Geschichte Russlands unter Kaiser Nikolaus I* (4 vols., Berlin, 1904), vol. 1, ch. 8; C. W. Crawley, *The Question of Greek Independence: A Study of British Policy in the Near East, 1821-1833* (Cambridge, 1930), 17-18; Stern, *Geschichte Europas*, 2:183-184; Edouard Driault and M. Lhéritier, *Histoire diplomatique de la Grèce* (Paris, 1925), 1:129-158.

⁷ Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 6:119-123.

⁸ Crawley, *Greek Independence*, 22-23.

⁹ *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, 2:6.

considerable legal justification to the Russian grievances. On the other hand, the Austrians tried to get the Russians to agree that the Greek revolt was another question, a Turkish question, in which the powers had no right to interfere. After lengthy conversations in Vienna, the Russian emissary carried a memoir to this effect back to St. Petersburg. Both in the conversations and in the composition of the memoir Gentz had taken an important part.¹⁰

Russia showed herself to be conciliatory, and the English ambassador at Constantinople, Lord Strangford, labored valiantly to restore diplomatic relations between St. Petersburg and the Porte. But the solution was not easily found. The Turks were in no apparent hurry; and the statesmen of Europe were mostly concerned about the Spanish situation when they assembled at Verona in the autumn.¹¹

At Verona only Gentz and Strangford seemed primarily interested in the Eastern Question, and it has already been noted that they became cordial friends. For the present England was pursuing a strictly hands-off policy with respect to the Greeks. Kapodistrias had departed on an indefinite leave, which turned out to be permanent, shortly before the Congress of Verona opened, and Russia consequently behaved in an encouraging fashion. With the adoption of "a meaningless formula," which "involved no action," the Eastern Question was disposed of for the time being, and Gentz, to his astonishment, received the Russian Order of St. Anna, with diamonds, for "the distinguished manner" in which he had "cooperated in the work of the conferences on oriental affairs." It was conceivable that this was a piece of Russian humor, but Gentz decided to take the statement at face value. Perhaps Alexander truly meant to work out his Eastern policy in cooperation with Austria.¹²

Meanwhile, though the revolutionists in Greece proper continued to enjoy success and proclaimed a republic with Mavrocordate as president, the Turks had been able to restore at least moderately settled conditions in the Danubian Principalities. The sultan had abolished the administrative control of the Phanariot Greeks, and new hospodars, chosen from the less well-to-do Rumanian nobility, were installed at Jassy and Bucharest. Many of the great nobility of both Rumanian and Greek extraction, however, had gone into exile in Transylvania and

¹⁰ *Tagebücher*, 3:31; Prokesch, *Abfall der Griechen*, 1:144-147.

¹¹ *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:131-132; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 2:140, 157.

¹² Crawley, *Greek Independence*, 26; *Tagebücher*, 3:105, 107; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:135-136; Gentz to Bombelles, December 15, 1822, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (31K) 95.

Bessarabia where they schemed and intrigued to unseat the new regime in the Principalities.¹³

Through the various intermediaries who had served him earlier in his dealings with the hospodars, Gentz was soon able to fish in these troubled waters to his great pecuniary advantage. Before the end of 1822 a formal offer for regular correspondence had been elicited from the hospodar of Wallachia, who stated flatteringly and frankly that he desired to have Gentz as his "mentor." In other words the correspondence was to contain not merely news but advice. On January 6, 1823, after noting visits from Rothschild and from Bellio (who had arranged the renewal of the Wallachian correspondence), Gentz added that he had plenty of money and that everything looked fine. Until 1828 the dispatches went regularly to Bucharest, and the annual fees, which started at two thousand ducats (not including the cash presents at New Year's and Easter), eventually rose to four thousand ducats, that is, to about ten thousand dollars.

Until 1826 Austrian prestige was great in Wallachia, and Gentz performed real service for his government there.¹⁴ Since the hospodar had asked for it, Gentz gave him good Austrian advice, and this advice was partly intended to be transmitted to the Turkish government.¹⁵ The Prussian government secured very exact information about this "notorious" state of affairs. An agent found out through the bankers how much Gentz was paid and declared that he had no doubt that it was "from the pen of Monsieur de Gentz that the Porte acquired information, which was just as prompt as it was exact, regarding the activities of the European cabinets." The agent went on to hazard the opinion that "it was through Monsieur de Gentz that the Porte had been ad-

¹³ Driault and Lhéritier, *Histoire de la Grèce*, 1:169-170. Here, as elsewhere, on matters pertaining to the Danubian Principalities, a more detailed citation of the sources and authorities may be found in Sweet, *Gentz and the Danubian Principalities*.

¹⁴ Due credit should likewise be given to the Austrian consul at Bucharest, Fleischhackl von Hakenau, who performed his tasks ably. Fleischhackl was also a sort of *de facto* British consul and communicated regularly with Lord Strangford at Constantinople. Strangford recommended that he be paid a small salary and added: "With reference to political considerations, I presume that the duty of watching over the extension and application of Russian influence in the Principalities, and if necessary of controlling [*sic*] it, may be safely entrusted to the agents of a Power which, like Austria, has so many reasons for being vigilant in that quarter." Strangford to Canning, April 10, 1823, P.R.O., London, F.O., 78/114.

¹⁵ Thus in a dispatch to the hospodar of March 16, 1827, in which Gentz set forth elaborately what the Turks ought to do, he wrote: "If you judge it advisable, Monseigneur, to transmit these ideas to some one of your correspondents at the capital, as the advice of a man sincerely attached to the Porte and speaking with full knowledge of the matter, they will perhaps attract the attention of those who will be able to profit by them." *Gentz aux hospodars*, 3:235-236.

vised and furnished even with the outlines of such admirably logical and sagacious replies and declarations." It is "at least likely," he continued, "that this is the story of the secret Austrian connections with the Porte, which only too probably exist, although under a less official character and not in such brazen fashion as M. Stratford Canning at Constantinople has chosen to suppose and has not feared to say to the face of the Internuncius."¹⁶

The writer of the above report knew what he was talking about, but Gentz had another unofficial route to Constantinople in addition to that which ran via Bucharest. In 1822 there had gone as Austrian internuncius to the Porte an old friend of Gentz's, Baron Ottenfels, who had been instrumental in helping him establish the original connection with the hospodar of Wallachia. At the outset of his term in Constantinople, Ottenfels asked Gentz to keep him informed of "the more secret motives and considerations," which found no mention in official dispatches. Gentz graciously agreed, and as Ottenfels appreciatively acknowledged later, "he truly kept his word. For ten long years, until his death in 1832, I received from him, with almost every mail, a letter packed with the most interesting notes, explanations, or suggestions, and often a commentary on the instructions sent to me at the direction of the prince. In this correspondence there was set forth a wealth of political wisdom, experience, and knowledge of men, the value of which was still further enhanced by the attractiveness of the style and by the masterly organization of material."¹⁷ Ottenfels was wont to quote Gentz in his conferences with the Turkish foreign minister, and when official dispatches from Metternich were lacking the Turk frequently asked: "What then says my Gentz, my treasure?" Gentz, informed about his prestige, soon took advantage of his position to send messages through Ottenfels direct to the Turkish foreign minister.¹⁸

Thus in one way and another Gentz had extraordinary opportunity to bring his views to the attention of the Turkish government, and to pursue in a circumspect way a personal Eastern policy. The following entry in his diary—the date is February 13, 1823—indicates that the Austrian emperor did not always appreciate these independent efforts:

¹⁶ Enclosure to a dispatch of May 1, 1827, in the secret correspondence from Vienna, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 81, Wien I, no. 139a. "Internuncius" was the title borne by the Austrian representative at the Porte.

¹⁷ J. Krauter, *Franz Freiherr von Ottenfels: Beiträge zur Politik Metternichs im griechischen Freiheitskampfe* (Salzburg, 1913), 81–82.

¹⁸ *Zur Geschichte der orientalischen Frage: Briefe aus dem Nachlasse Friedrichs von Gentz, 1823–1829*, edited by Anton Count Prokesch von Osten (Vienna, 1877), 52, 152–161; Ottenfels to Gentz, August 22, 1826, S.A., Vienna, Nachlass Gentz, 23.

"I had a very unpleasant discussion with the prince [Metternich] about various intercepted letters to Bucharest which the emperor found objectionable, although the prince conducted the discussion with great fairness and indulgence. I hope that this explanation will serve to strengthen for the future this connection, which is so important to my economic existence." When one remembers that Gentz departed for his vacation in 1826 with a retinue of eleven, it is clear that his economic existence had become that of a very fine gentleman indeed.¹⁹

¹⁹ *Tagebücher*, 3:153; 4:203.

19. The Eastern Question, 1823-1826

THE GREEK REVOLT in its first phase had seriously endangered Gentz's personal fortunes, but he had advanced himself, temporarily at least, to a position more advantageous in some respects than before. Austrian policy had also had its success in that Russian intervention in Turkey had thus far been averted; but it was a negative success, not a positive achievement.

The major task of Austrian policy remained for the future. Russian intervention must still be averted, but intervention might be expected at any time unless the particular grievances of the Russians against the Turks were cleared up. Austrian policy must therefore strive to facilitate the re-establishment of amicable relations between Russia and Turkey. The continuance of the Greek revolt made this a difficult task. Much as they would have liked to do so, the Austrians could not ignore the Greeks. In spite of the ground swell of pro-Greek sentiment that was sweeping Europe, the governments, and particularly the Russian government, must be held to the orthodox dogma that the Greeks had revolted against their legitimate Turkish masters and that this was a matter of Turkish, not of European, concern. At the same time, to clear the atmosphere, the Turks must be quietly admonished to get down to business, put their house in order, and crush the Greeks, without any more massacres than were absolutely necessary.

Although Stratford Canning as early as September, 1821, had expressed the ominous desire to see the Greeks "put in possession of their whole patrimony" and the sultan "driven bag and baggage into the heart of Asia,"¹ England until 1823 acted in reasonable accord with the broad aims of Austrian policy. Following the Congress of Verona, Lord Stratford, British ambassador at Constantinople, was entrusted with the task of whittling away at the obstructions that blocked the renewal of diplomatic relations between St. Petersburg and the Porte. Strang-

¹ Lane-Poole, *Stratford Canning*, 1:307.

ford made slow progress, and with every month Austrian distrust of England increased. George Canning, it became more and more evident, was not Castlereagh; but just where Canning was taking England was not altogether clear.

In March, 1823, Canning recognized the Greeks as belligerents, and the Austrians saw in this action an indication that they might fear the worst. Nevertheless, they put on as good a face as possible, since they had every reason to wish Lord Strangford success in his negotiation. Canning's recognition of Greek belligerency and the acts and utterances of countless Englishmen did not help Strangford in his dealings with the Turks, however; and in August, Gentz, who had begun to doubt his trustworthiness, felt it necessary to defend him and English foreign policy in a memoir intended ultimately, no doubt, to reach Turkish eyes. The Porte must distinguish, he pointed out, between Englishmen who were private citizens and Englishmen who were public servants, and above all should avoid irritating unnecessarily a government whose good will was so extraordinarily valuable.² Privately, though he acknowledged the value of Britain's friendship to both Turkey and Austria, Gentz expressed profound disillusionment about England's past and present role in the Concert; Austria ought not, need not, grovel to secure England's active cooperation. Let Austria neutralize Canning's capacity to work harm, he proudly urged.³

By September, 1823, Strangford had reached the point in his negotiations at Constantinople where only one major issue remained in dispute between Russia and Turkey: the Turks still declined to evacuate their troops from the Danubian Principalities. The czar was so far satisfied that he agreed to send a commercial representative to Constantinople as an indication of his faithful intention to return his ambassador to the Porte when the Turks met his demands in full. At this point Strangford contributed his bit to the prolongation of the unsettled conditions by refusing to exert pressure to bring about the Sultan's acquiescence. He maintained that the Turks were justified in declining to evacuate the Principalities.⁴

In spite of the stalemate Metternich took a sanguine view of the situation. Gentz was much more pessimistic, as he well might be, since

² "De l'influence exercée par les Anglais sur l'insurrection de la Grèce," August 16, 1823, S.A., Vienna, Nachlass Gentz, 22. See also *Tagebücher*, 3:216.

³ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 72-78.

⁴ *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 377; Crawley, *Greek Independence*, 30; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 2:259-270; Gentz to Samourcass, October 18, 1823, S.A., Vienna, Nachlass Gentz, 22; Prokesch, *Zur Geschichte der orientalischen Frage: Briefe aus dem Nachlasse Friedrichs von Gentz*, 15.

this was a matter that concerned his precious "economic well-being." The presence of Turkish troops in the Principalities was no longer necessary, in his opinion, and the Russian demand for evacuation was justified. The hospodar of Wallachia naturally wanted as much freedom of action as possible. Each time the Russians renewed their demand the Turks became increasingly suspicious that the hospodar was urging the Russians on, and the time might come when the Turks out of irritation would cashier the hospodar. Gentz naturally wanted each hospodar to serve his full term of seven years; he never knew when some new appointee would decide to economize on Gentz. Without continued pressure from Strangford, however, he did not believe the Turks would give in. But Strangford went his dilatory way, and it was not until the middle of 1824, after the British ambassador at last re-entered the lists, that the Turks agreed to withdraw their troops from the Principalities. It was not the Ottoman way, however, to translate words immediately into deeds, and the matter continued to plague Gentz for several months to come.⁵

The uncooperative attitude of the Turks was thus highly annoying to even their best friends, and the international complications provoked by the interminable warfare in Greece became so serious that the Austrians, in the autumn of 1823, reconciled themselves to the fact that the powers must do something about this ticklish question. Consequently, when the czar proposed a conference of ambassadors at St. Petersburg, for the purpose of uniting on a common Greek policy, Austria agreed to participate.

At Vienna it was clearly recognized that the European ascendancy of Metternich faced its most serious crisis. "It is not merely a question of whether or not Turkey shall continue to exist as an empire," declared Gentz, putting the matter as dramatically as possible. "It is a question of whether or not all political order shall stand or fall."⁶ The statement sounds plain enough, but what Gentz really meant was this: In Greece, as in Italy two years before, Austrian interests demanded a strong defense of legitimacy; Austria must now gird herself to defend legitimacy again to the last ditch. Kapodistrias was gone, but Alexander was still in danger of espousing the insidious doctrine that Czartoryski had suggested twenty years before and that Kapodistrias had urged upon him in vain at Troppau; namely, that of transforming the

⁵ Gentz to Samourcass, November 4, 1823, S.A., Vienna, Nachlass Gentz, 22; Gentz to Ottenfels, May 25, 1825, and Ottenfels to Gentz, November 25, 1825, S.A., Vienna, Nachlass Gentz, 23; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 3:21; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 75-80.

⁶ *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 377.

Conservative Alliance into a dynamic propagator of change in the European order. This idea must once more be scotched.

Gentz combated the idea both officially and privately, in whatever form it presented itself. Samourcass, a rich Greek with whom he had formed a profitable connection, argued ingratiatingly: "I dare to suggest that it would be worthy of the admirable sagacity that distinguishes the politics of our day to direct this [Greek] revolution, by means of wise management, toward a salutary end; to utilize it; to leave to it means of developing, instead of smothering it; and to give to it, finally, a form analagous *to the policy of the Great Powers of Europe*, so that it would become in time a barrier *against ambitious intentions*."⁷

Gentz did not allow himself to be weaned from the true faith by such ingenious corruption of his own doctrine of equilibrium. He answered flatly: "I defend the integrity of the Ottoman Empire not only because I think I have plumbed the depths and the danger into which the destruction of this power would plunge Europe, but also, and perhaps more so, because of that sense of justice which does not allow me to have 'two weights and two measures.'" The Ottoman Empire, he went on to say, was as legitimate as any other European state.

The dramatist and poet Grillparzer, who doubtless saw eye to eye with Samourcass on the self-righteous pontificating at the Austrian chancellery, wrote some years later:

"Grundsätze, Freund, Prinzipien
Sind's, die den Staatsmann führen,
Sie geben Haltung, hält man sie,
Und lassen sich ignorieren."⁸

Yet Metternich and Gentz, in spite of Grillparzer's skepticism, believed in their own words. What looked to some like rank hypocrisy was to them merely the sort of compromise that necessity frequently demands of the practical statesman. As the Eastern Question developed the statesmen in Vienna began to ask themselves cautiously whether the time had not come to compromise again with their legitimist principles.

Soon after Austria agreed to participate in the St. Petersburg conferences on the Greek situation, the czar sent out a confidential memoir

⁷ Samourcass was resorting to an argument that had been put to heavy use by Mavrocordato and that had found the public support of the well-known publicist, the Abbé de Pradt. Driault and Lhéritier, *Histoire de la Grèce*, 1:218-219. By 1839 both Metternich and Prokesch had come to sympathize with the idea of a new Byzantium. Friedrich Engel-Janosi, "Austria and the Beginnings of the Kingdom of Greece," in the *Journal of Central European Affairs*, 1 (1941):41-44. For a fuller treatment of Gentz's relations with Samourcass, see Sweet, *Gentz and the Danubian Principalities*, 11-16.

⁸ *Grillparzers Werke*, edited by Rudolf Franz (5 vols., Leipzig, n. d.), 1:169.

that expressed only too clearly his ideas on the sort of solution the powers should work for: Greece should be divided into three autonomous principalities, including Thessaly and Epirus. Behind this proposal, as Mavrocordato at once perceived, was the intention to achieve "the hospodarization of Greece"; that is to say, Russia would establish a protective control over the country similar to that which she had exercised over the Danubian Principalities since 1774. With time, Friedrich Gentz might have found this a lucrative arrangement, as he had in the case of the Principalities; but he agreed with Metternich that the Russian proposal was monstrous.⁹

Desirous of retaining, if possible, the good will of Alexander, Metternich kept his real thoughts to himself. The sultan had obtained the aid of Mehemet Ali of Egypt, and in the spring of 1824 it looked as though the Turks, given time, might subdue the Greeks after all. Since Greek subjugation was the desirable solution from the Austrian standpoint, Metternich jockeyed for time. The St. Petersburg conferences were encouraged to drag on fruitlessly; the Russian memoir lay in the Austrian foreign office for three months unanswered. Finally a polite note, drawn up by Gentz, was dispatched to St. Petersburg with the interesting comment that the "fundamental arrangements" of the Russian plan answered the "essential conditions of a pacification generally acceptable."¹⁰ This was a diplomat's way of saying that the launching of a negotiation, provided it could be made interminable, would suit Austria splendidly.

Gentz saw no alternative to Metternich's policy of temporization, but he lacked Metternich's faith in the efficacy of delay. His skepticism proved justified: the year 1824 dragged by without bringing the decisive Turkish victory that Metternich desired. Indeed, the Greeks had a certain measure of military success, and in December Mavrocordato took advantage of their favorable position to make a bid through Gentz for Austrian support. After stressing his own essential conservatism and the unlikelihood that the Turks would ever suppress the revolt, Mavrocordato marshaled arguments to show that, from the standpoint of European interests in general, an independent Greece would be eminently desirable. A liberated Greece, he declared, would have no reason to be

⁹ Driault and Lhéritier, *Histoire de la Grèce*, 1:231.

¹⁰ Prokesch, *Abfall der Griechen*, 4:75-76; *Tagebücher*, 3:287, 290; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, p. 117. Gentz was put in an embarrassing position when the Russian memoir, which the Austrians had tried to keep secret, was published in a Paris newspaper. Having told his Wallachian correspondent nothing of it, he found it necessary to resort to out-and-out lying. The Russian memoir of January 9, 1824, had not arrived in Vienna, he declared, until the latter part of April. *Gentz aux hospodars*, 2:338-343.

either antagonistic to Turkey or subservient to Russia, whereas the reverse would be true of a semi-independent state. In short, Austria ought to recognize the independence of Greece.¹¹

Mavrocordato's arguments were timely. Vienna was beginning to realize that other means than those heretofore relied upon were necessary to solve the Greek problem, and Mavrocordato's communication had followed a hint that a change of course was being contemplated by the Austrian government. Mavrocordato erred, however, in assuming that the niceties of Austrian diplomatic conduct would permit an outright espousal of the Greek cause. The position of the Turkish government, so far as the Greeks were concerned, was similar to that of the Spanish government with respect to its former colonies. "No law exists between independent states other than that established by treaties," Gentz pointed out in his reply to Mavrocordato. "Treaties have either implicitly admitted, or explicitly recognized, the sovereignty that the Porte has exercised over Greece for centuries."¹² Therefore Austrian recognition of Greek independence could only follow prior action by the Turkish government.

This did not mean to Gentz that Austria and the other powers should fold their hands patiently and wait for the Turkish government to lead the way. Stability and legitimacy had been solemnly reaffirmed as the fundamental principles of the Austrian government. This gave dignity and strength to the Austrian position. But Austria did not propose to let the other powers suppose that because she was moral she was muscle-bound. In a surprising document laid before Metternich, and bearing the date November 10, 1824, Gentz declared that Austria should propose out-and-out recognition of Greek independence.¹³ Otherwise she stood in danger of being dragged into a war to push through a Russian plan, which neither the Turks nor the Greeks desired any more than the Austrians. He later said that this proposal was only a move to tie the negotiations at St. Petersburg in a knot, but there is evidence to indicate that at the outset he was serious about it. A hint he dropped to the Austrian consul at Corfu, a dispatch to the hospodar of Wallachia, a letter to Ottenfels, all suggest that he was in dead earnest.¹⁴

The possibility of using Gentz's proposal of recognition to prolong the discussions at St. Petersburg appealed to Metternich, and in Janu-

¹¹ Prokesch, *Abfall der Griechen*, 4:132-137.

¹² *Ibid.*, 140-141.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 1:324, note; *Tagebücher*, 3:368-369.

¹⁴ Krauter, *Ottenfels*, 137, 148; Prokesch, *Abfall der Griechen*, 1:316; 4:132-133; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 2:400-406.

ary, 1825, he had Gentz draw up a dispatch instructing Lebzeltern, the Austrian ambassador at St. Petersburg, to suggest that the powers admit "the independence of Morea and the islands, if the Porte itself did not relieve them of this resolution by adopting some wise, efficacious, and proper measure to bring a rapid conclusion to a state of affairs incompatible with the peace and well-being of Europe."¹⁵ The proposal brought about the desired delay. The English declined to take part in the negotiations at all, and after wrangling for weeks the other states could agree only to proceed in a pleasant way, confidentially and verbally, to persuade the Porte to "admit of its own accord the principle of intervention by the powers."¹⁶

Vienna felt that there was no reason to be morose about the situation. The Turks had had another chance to marshal their forces against the rebels, and from Constantinople Ottenfels reported: "The Porte no longer entertains any doubts about the success of this year's campaign and consequently will be little inclined to let itself be held up by proposals like that for an armistice." Gentz was inclined to think that the Greeks actually had more power of resistance than many observers would admit, but he did not doubt that they "would succumb sooner or later, if the Turks were given time and power to deploy their forces against them."¹⁷

In June, 1825, the Turks with their usual air of bland indifference refused to admit that the powers had any right to intervene in their internal affairs, and Metternich, having expressed his mind, waited to see what Russia would do. Russia and England pulled strings behind the scenes, but the intervention that Vienna feared did not occur. The Turks thus had time in 1825 to deploy their forces against the Greeks. Gentz wanted to see something done to enable the Turks to use this time to best advantage. When the imaginative Strangford at Constantinople suggested a Rothschild loan to the sultan, in return for a supposedly profitable concession to work copper deposits in Asia Minor, Gentz pricked up his ears. He sought the assistance of his friend Ottenfels, and suggested the possibility of a visit to Constantinople by Goldschmidt, a Rothschild representative. Ottenfels, who had acquired a strong dislike for Strangford, threw cold water on the whole scheme.¹⁸ The incident, in addition to the interest that attaches to it as an early

¹⁵ Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:627; *Tagebücher*, 4:5-6; Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere*, 4:202-209.

¹⁶ *Gentz aux hospodars*, 2:469-472.

¹⁷ Ottenfels to Gentz, March 16, 1825, S.A., Vienna, Nachlass Gentz, 23; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 3:4-5.

¹⁸ Ottenfels to Gentz, May 25, 1825, S.A., Vienna, Nachlass Gentz, 23.

example of the way politicians and bankers cooperated in the economic penetration of the Ottoman Empire, also indicates how greatly Gentz, by 1825, had come to desire a more active Austrian policy in the Eastern Question.

Metternich, however, was content to sit passively by. It was not until after Alexander died, late in 1825, that a proposal came from Vienna, the purpose of which was negative. The proposal was made under the following circumstances. Lord Strangford had been sent as ambassador to St. Petersburg in the autumn of 1825. The purpose of his mission was to utilize the existing coolness between St. Petersburg and Vienna to establish cordial Anglo-Russian relations as a preliminary step to Anglo-Russian mediation in the Eastern Question, should Canning fail to bring about a mediation through England alone. Strangford, however, continued to think in terms of the Concert of Europe, and quite without authority proposed that a new offer of mediation be made by the five powers at the Porte in favor of the Greeks. If the offer was turned down, the Russians were to recall their representative. It was this idea that Metternich took up and had Gentz embody in a memoir. Prince Ferdinand von Este carried the document with him when he journeyed to St. Petersburg to present the official best wishes of the Austrian government to the new czar. The idea had not the remotest chance of success. When the outraged Canning heard of Strangford's audacity in trying to direct English foreign policy from the capital of Russia, he rose to the occasion: "The instructions which I have now to give to your excellency," he wrote, "are comprised in a few short words — *to be quiet.*"¹⁹

Without being directly at odds with Metternich over the lame way that affairs were proceeding at Vienna, Gentz could not refrain from occasional squirmings. From the outset he had preached the supreme significance to Austria of the Eastern Question; the Russian colossus had always appeared a trifle more colossal to him than to Metternich. To offset the power of Russia, Gentz usually favored an Austrian policy of positive action. The best he could do in 1825, however, was to urge that the Austrian navy, such as it was, should protect Austrian commerce more zealously against the ravages of Greek pirates. In spite of objections from penurious treasury officials, he succeeded in pushing through the desired measures. He had secured at least some positive

¹⁹ Crawley, *Greek Independence*, 48; H. W. V. Temperley, *The Foreign Policy of Canning, 1822-1827* (London, 1925), 290; Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere*, 4:288-289; *Tagebücher*, 4:127; Stern, *Geschichte Europas*, 3:83; Lane-Poole, *Stratford Canning*, 1:395, note.

action by Austria, but only at the sacrifice of some of that legalistic correctness which, he proudly thought, formed the basis of Austrian policy as a whole. For as Canning slyly pointed out, since Austria refused recognition to the Greeks, it would be only logical to hold Turkey responsible for the acts of piracy by its subjects.²⁰

During the first months of 1826 the new czar of Russia, Nicholas I, held the center of the stage. Nicholas' intention, Gentz understood, was to concentrate on internal reform, and his conduct was at first reassuring. On March 17, however, Russia sent an ultimatum to the Porte. This action, though drastic, caused no particular alarm in Vienna. Ignoring the Greek question, Russia demanded that the Turks send delegates to clear up the specific points of controversy that still existed in connection with the Treaty of 1812. The ultimatum impressed Gentz as being straight to the point and as indicating a desire for a peace based on a real settlement of differences between the two states. The Turks, having decided to be discreet, agreed to the Russian demands, and Akkermann in Bessarabia was designated as the place where the negotiations should take place. Gentz expressed his relief at such appropriate compliance by addressing a laudatory letter, via Ottenfels, to the Turkish foreign minister.²¹

In the meantime events of great importance had been taking place in St. Petersburg. Wellington, who had journeyed to Russia ostensibly to extend the best wishes of England to the new czar, was in reality under orders to negotiate an Anglo-Russian agreement on what to do next in regard to the Greek question. The negotiation culminated on April 4 with an important protocol stipulating "joint formulation, and joint or separate mediation, of a settlement between Turkey and the Greeks, on the basis of an autonomous and tributary Greek principality." This protocol, unlike those of the allies, was actually meant to be carried out. It marked not only the beginning of a new phase in the diplomatic history of the Greek revolt, but also the collapse of the Concert of Europe. The collapse, however, had been so long foreshadowed that it aroused no extraordinary expressions of wrath in Vienna. Gentz was at first inclined to attribute the agreement to the

²⁰ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 218-220, 286-287; *Tagebücher*, 4:84, 102, 106, 123, 147, 167; Ottenfels to Gentz, November 25, 1825, January 25, 1826, February 25, 1826, S.A., Vienna, Nachlass Gentz, 23; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 5:230; Prokesch, *Zur Geschichte der orientalischen Frage: Briefe aus dem Nachlasse Friedrichs von Gentz*, 136-144; Crawley, *Greek Independence*, 67.

²¹ *Gentz aux hospodars*, 3:100-102, 113-122; Ottenfels to Gentz, May 26, 1826, S.A., Vienna, Nachlass Gentz, 23; Prokesch, *Zur Geschichte der orientalischen Frage: Briefe aus dem Nachlasse Friedrichs von Gentz*, 124-125.

clumsy diplomacy of Wellington, but he later came to the more correct conclusion that the Russian ambassador at London and his wife — the famous Lievens — were its real instigators. Canning, curiously enough, who was also very much behind the project, came in for relatively little blame.²²

As summer gave way to autumn, careful observers in Vienna began to think that the Anglo-Russian agreement would not work out so detrimentally to Austrian interests after all. In October at Akkermann, to Gentz's great relief, the Turks settled their differences with Russia, exclusive of the Greek difficulty; and Ribeaupierre, long before designated as Russia's new ambassador to the Porte, actually went to the Porte. At the same time Canning, held back by opposition within the cabinet, pursued a course which suggested that he might use the agreement between England and Russia as an effective check upon any warlike intentions the Russians might have. On July 31, 1826, Gentz wrote: "Canning and the English government in general are today just as decided worshipers of the stability system as we are, but with the important difference that with us it was the fruit of free and mature deliberation and farsighted wisdom; with them, on the contrary, it is the result of direct and acutely felt embarrassment." As late as December 1 he could still say that he did not think any new step toward Greek pacification was imminent.²³

Nevertheless, a new step was taken and taken promptly. Austria, as well as Prussia and France, was invited to associate herself in some project of Greek pacification based on the broad principle set forth in the protocol of April 4. Gentz emphatically opposed any such plan of action, and he composed the note in which Austria declared her unwillingness to participate. The Anglo-Russian project, he said frankly to the Prussian envoy at Vienna, would "simply dispose of the life of another [Turkey], which had not given occasion for it by any offense."²⁴

Convinced that England and Russia now certainly meant business, Gentz, in a letter obviously intended for the Porte but written to the hospodar of Wallachia, expressed his ideas on the way Turkey should

²² Crawley, *Greek Independence*, 54-64; Temperley, *Foreign Policy of Canning*, 338-362, 390-394; Prokesch, *Abfall der Griechen*, 4:244-246, 329; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 3:93, 141-149; Krauter, *Ottensfels*, 206.

²³ *Gentz aux hospodars*, 3:165-176, 190-191; Prokesch, *Zur Geschichte der orientalischen Frage: Briefe aus dem Nachlasse Friedrichs von Gentz*, 150-157; Ottensfels to Gentz, September 8, October 25, 1826, S.A., Vienna, Nachlass Gentz, 23; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 276, 284-285.

²⁴ Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere*, 4:323-326; *Tagebücher*, 4:238; Maltzahn to Bernstorff, February 12, 1827, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 81, Wien I, no. 139.

act. Turkey, he declared, should draw up "a reasonable and acceptable plan of pacification, such that her enlightened friends could support with a clear conscience and without running the risk of being accused of partiality and barbarism." This idea was taken up by Metternich, who made a definite recommendation to the Porte that Turkey should produce such a plan. But the Turks remained stubborn, and when they finally got around to answer the powers, their reply was as usual in the negative.²⁵

Turkish quibbling proved fatal to Austria's Eastern policy. On July 6, 1827, Russia, England, and France agreed on joint action. The three powers presented the Porte with an ultimatum, and on October 20, 1827, the combined Turkish-Egyptian fleet was destroyed by the naval forces of the allies at Navarino. In the meantime death had removed George Canning; and as English policy foundered, Russia made her own decisions, unrestrained.

In a last brave attempt to draw the iron out of the fire, Metternich, on March 15, 1828, proposed that the powers recognize the independence of Morea and the Islands, and if necessary compel the Porte by force of arms to heed their will. Gentz now remembered, with some satisfaction, that for thirty years, from 1684 to 1714, the Ottoman Empire "had existed without Morea, and existed with its strength and glory undiminished."²⁶ The principle of legitimacy was being sacrificed out of stark necessity.

If the daring and imaginative Canning had been at the helm in England, he might at last have cooperated with Metternich; and Gentz might once more have trumpeted his judgment of 1809 that Canning was the greatest man in England or even in the world. For though Canning's policy pointed toward the creation of a Greek state, it also pointed to the use of the British fleet in the Dardanelles not only to coerce Turkey but also to protect her should Russia still threaten war. That appears to have been substantially what Gentz wanted.²⁷ But in London different views prevailed in the spring of 1828, and Russia was allowed to plow her furrow about as she pleased. On April 26 appeared her manifesto and the war was on.

²⁵ *Gentz aux hospodars*, 3:192-200, 205, 254-259, 283-285, 296-301; Krauter, *Ottensfels*, 205; Prokesch, *Abfall der Griechen*, 4:329-333.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 5:177-187; Krauter, *Ottensfels*, 215.

²⁷ Fournier, "Gentz und der Friede von Schoenbrunn," in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, 144:231; Crawley, *Greek Independence*, 97. See also Gentz to Alfred Schoenburg, March 12, 1828, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (31K) 95; Krauter, *Ottensfels*, 246-247; *Aus dem Nachlasse des Grafen Prokesch von Osten: Briefwechsel mit Herrn von Gentz und Fürsten Metternich*, edited by Anton Count Prokesch von Osten (2 vols., Vienna, 1881), 1:113-114.

It had become apparent to even the Austrians that the powers could not properly intervene in Greece to defend the principle of legitimacy. "Correct" procedure called for assent by the legitimate government at the Porte to such intervention; but the Porte would assent to no such intervention: it knew that some of the powers did not want, and would not consent to, a restoration of Turkish control in Greece. The dynamic principle of nationalism had successfully challenged the static principle of legitimacy, and the Conservative Alliance had been split asunder.

The German temper between 1815 and 1830—the so-called Biedermeier mood—was keyed to compromise between the ideal and the actual.²⁸ Compromise also characterized the foreign policy of Austria, for which the emperor and Metternich were responsible, but which Gentz had influenced every step of the way. No man had played a greater role in articulating the ideals of the Conservative Alliance than he. Yet no man in the Austrian foreign office had a clearer view of facts, a deeper insight into the logic of events. In connection with the Greek question he had consistently urged that the ideals of the Alliance be kept intact; and when this became obviously impossible, he had recommended a compromise in harmony with the political amenities and consistent with Austrian interests. Even this had failed. The Russo-Turkish war had brought the Greek question to a new phase. But for Gentz it was the end of an epoch.

²⁸ Paul Kluckhohn, "Biedermeier als literarische Epochenbezeichnung," in the *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 13 (1935):14-15.

20. German Affairs, 1820-1828

IN THE MIDST of his multifarious activities during the decade of the twenties Gentz did not neglect his original specialty — German public opinion. He had been among the first men in Germany to appreciate fully the power of the press, and now that he had associated himself with the forces of conservatism he realized only too well the difficulties that an unbridled press could create. Metternich shared these views. Chateaubriand records that he had seen Metternich “at Verona leave the most important business and lock himself up distractedly with M. de Gentz to draft out an article in reply to the *Constitutionnel* and the *Débats*.”¹

The customary vehicle for the expression of official Austrian views was the *Oesterreichische Beobachter*, to which Gentz often contributed. Josef von Pilat, the editor, was also Metternich’s private secretary and one of Gentz’s closest friends. The two conferred constantly, and when Gentz was away from Vienna he furnished Pilat with a daily chronicle. In the Habsburg domains the public read what the censors allowed, and all the newspapers in the realm took their cue from the *Oesterreichische Beobachter*. The report of Baron Maltzahn, the Prussian ambassador, on the Austrian press of 1830 is equally applicable to the press of 1820. “The few political papers that appear in Vienna and in the other chief cities (Prague, Pesth, Agram, Milan, Trieste), are all merely the true echo of the *Oesterreichische Beobachter*,” Maltzahn stated. “The *Beobachter*, in its taciturnity, arouses a little interest only when Prince Metternich, from his lofty position, finds it desirable to step down into the arena of European journalism to break a lance with the Parisian newspaper writers. Polemical, and other articles of this type, short as they sometimes are, . . . result usually from long discussions between the prince and Messrs. Gentz and Pilat.”²

¹ Chateaubriand, *Memoirs*, 5:342.

² Maltzahn to Bernstorff, June 24, 1830, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 92, Maltzahn Papers.

Foreign observers like Chateaubriand and Maltzahn might note with some surprise the serious attention that the highest Austrian officials paid to small details appearing in the press; they might remark impatiently on the stupifying dullness of the writing that found its way into print; but the fact remains that during the twenties Austrian public opinion remained docile, which was all that was expected of it.

In Prussia, during the same period, the conservative ideas of official Vienna enjoyed a clear ascendancy; under Metternich's guidance Austria and Prussia pursued a common policy in Germany. This rapport had not been won without a battle. There had been powerful agitation in Prussia for the establishment of a real constitutional monarchy, but Frederick William III had profited by the factionalism within the constitutional party to push through his own ideas. Provincial assemblies with merely advisory powers were created, and king and bureaucracy thus remained supreme. The struggle had been followed with keen interest at Vienna, and Gentz, who in 1819 had ardently defended the position of the monarch as supreme lawgiver, once again had been called upon to state the ultraconservative position for the edification of the Prussian king.³

Conditions in the southern and middle German states were far less satisfactory, for some of the petty sovereigns had not a proper respect for Vienna. Nassau, Saxe-Weimar, Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg, had all received constitutions, and the governments of some of these states, and of others like Saxony, permitted the press a license that was anathema to Gentz and Metternich. The "Grand Bursch" of Weimar and the king of Württemberg, who nourished hopes of leading a "Third Germany," equal in importance to Prussia and Austria, set out covertly to sabotage the Karlsbad decrees.

The clever opening of the anti-Karlsbad campaign touched Gentz in a sensitive spot. In his famous open letter of 1797 to Frederick William III, it will be remembered, he had advocated freedom of the press;

³ Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 2:282-290; Paul Bailleu, "Eine Denkschrift über Einführung und Bildung von Provinzialständen in Preussen," in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, 50 (1883); Alfred Stern, "Hardenbergs Denkschrift über die preussische Verfassung vom 10. Oktober, 1820, und Metternichs Troppauer Memoire," in *Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte*, 26 (1886). Bailleu, who published Gentz's memoir from a copy in the Berlin archives, dated it from internal evidence at 1819. Stern saw the pertinent material in the Vienna archives — the original rough sketch in Metternich's handwriting, the copy which was sent to Hardenberg and returned — and dated the document at 1820. I have seen these documents (S.A., Vienna, Preussen Collectanea, 4), and can see no reason whatever for doubting Stern's judgment. I find this worth mentioning because Treitschke, who had not seen these particular manuscripts, insinuates that Stern's conclusions are open to doubt. Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:760.

and unluckily for him everyone had not forgotten this fact. It occurred to the Leipzig publisher Brockhaus that a reprint of this document would be highly "piquant," and in 1820 the piece was brought out, ostensibly by a Brussels firm. A good deal of embarrassing laughter resounded through Germany. In vain did Adam Müller pass the word around that Gentz viewed his youthful indiscretion "as his only political sin." The thing was done, and Gentz had to make the best of it. By 1831, indeed, he was able to admit that he had received "a well-deserved chastisement." His immediate reaction, however, was one of profound annoyance. Brockhaus' part in the business was no mystery to him, and he knew further that Brockhaus was also bringing out secretly the very objectionable periodical *Hermes*. Even Metternich must have smiled a little when Gentz, using the *Hermes* as his ground for complaint, urged that more general measures were needed to control the "misuse of branch print shops, false firms, etc."⁴

During 1820 and 1821 the troubles that beset southern Europe were so great that the Vienna government could only congratulate itself that conditions in Germany were no worse than they were. The misuse of branch print shops was annoying, but it could wait. In the meantime the agitation centering in Württemberg for the medium-sized German states to combine against Austria and Prussia continued to grow. A notable pamphlet entitled *Manuskript aus Süddeutschland* had already appeared in 1820, but when its anonymous author (Lindner) came forth in 1822 with another pamphlet, *Über die gegenwärtige Lage von Europa*, Gentz went on the warpath. "Such a political meteor has not appeared in the German political heaven for a long time," he noted after reading the pamphlet "with great agitation."⁵

Lindner's remarkable work is a document of some importance in the history of German nationalist thought. At Metternich's behest, Gentz gave it a searching analysis, which was published in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* on March 21, 1822. Interpreting Lindner's work correctly as an

⁴ Heinrich E. Brockhaus, *Die Firma F. A. Brockhaus von der Begründung bis zum hundertjährigen Jubiläum, 1805-1905* (Leipzig, 1905), 38; Ludwig Salomon, *Geschichte des deutschen Zeitungswesens* (3 vols., Oldenburg and Leipzig), 3:20-22; Heinrich E. Brockhaus, *Friedrich Arnold Brockhaus* (3 vols., Leipzig, 1872-81), 2:323-325; *Aus den Tagebüchern des Grafen Prokesch von Osten*, edited by Anton Count Prokesch von Osten (Vienna, 1909), 80; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 24-26.

⁵ The full title page of the Lindner pamphlet reads: "*Über die gegenwärtige Lage von Europa: Ein Bericht, Sr. H. dem Prinzen von XX. auf Befehl vorgelegt von Freiherr von X.* Herausgegeben von Carl Heinrich Kollmanner. Frankfurt und Leipzig, auf Kosten des Herausgebers. 1822." The copy used by Gentz, with his markings on the pages, may be seen in the Staats-Archiv, Vienna, Interiora (61), 105. See also *Tagebücher*, 3:6; Pollard, "Germanic Confederation," in *The Cambridge Modern History*, 10:369; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:521-522.

attack on "everything which exists and especially everything *which exists in Germany*," Gentz sought to give his article a pervasive tone of outrage that such ideas could arise in the minds of men, to say nothing of their coming to expression. His fear of nationalism was, in fact, so great that he had shuddered at even the thought of what the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* might do to arouse a sense of Germanic solidarity; and he had refused to have any part in the publication of this great collection of historical source material.⁶

The dominant note in Lindner's work was a vigorous nationalism: "Germany does not have to be weak; our governments have only to *will* it, and we shall be the best, the most civilized, the strongest people on earth." Lindner called upon the princes to pool their interests in a great common purpose and to set the stage for the "German Bonaparte," who would bring into existence a new state "worthy of the enlightenment and civilization of the century." Gentz, resorting to a device frequently used in polemical writing, equated Lindner's nationalism with the hated Bonapartism and pictured Lindner's whole argument as a throwback to the political heresy that set no store by the sacred principle of equilibrium. He foresaw with trepidation the ejection of Austria from Germany, and, faithful Habsburg subject that he had become, he denounced Lindner in no uncertain terms.

Gentz's article was sent to the Austrian representatives at the various German courts, and Gentz himself composed the accompanying note, which called attention to the insidious nature of the Lindner pamphlet and emphasized the importance of maintaining the Germanic Confederation unchanged. Before long Lindner felt the kind of pressure that Vienna knew how to exert, and in 1824 he crawled to Metternich begging for forgiveness.⁷

Press conditions, after this episode, became not better but worse, and in September, 1822 — at the period when consultations were taking place in Vienna on the course to pursue at the Congress of Verona — Gentz drew up a memoir⁸ urging positive steps to curb the abuses that he saw

⁶ Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 3:241-257; Gentz to Schoenburg, February 17, 1822, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, 95; Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:310-311; George P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1928), 66-67; Mayr, *Geschichte der oesterreichischen Staatskanzlei*, 136.

⁷ Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 3:240-241. See also the dispatch to Trautmannsdorff, February 6, 1822, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (31K) 95.

⁸ "Mémoire sur la nécessité et sur les moyens de réprimer les abus de la presse en Allemagne," S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105. The manuscript is in the hand of a copyist, with additional marginal corrections in Gentz's writing. He has noted on the manuscript: "Written in the month of September, 1822." That this was September 4 or 5 is evident from his *Tagebücher*, 3:80.

rampant. He pointed to conditions in Saxony, Grand-ducal Hesse, and Württemberg as especially abominable. The "inconceivable laxity" of the Saxon government threatened unusual danger to the other states, since Leipzig was the center of the German book trade. In Hesse "censorship had existed only in name," and a terrible sheet, the *Mainzer Zeitung*, was allowed to flourish.⁹ Finally, in Württemberg a situation prevailed which defied description. Whereas in the other German states "enemies of peace and public order are only tolerated, in . . . Württemberg," Gentz declared, "they are protected, caressed, and magnanimously assisted." Here was published the *Neckar Zeitung*, vilest of sheets. In its columns were to be found a selection of the most obnoxious articles from foreign papers, inevitably prejudiced news articles, and finally, under *mélanges*, an array more scandalous than could be imagined "of bitter jokes, gross blasphemies against religion and its ministers, and infamous anecdotes about the most respectable people, living and dead." A twofold program was desirable, Gentz concluded: first, the "conservative sovereigns—guardians of the general tranquillity"—should agree upon means of exerting direct pressure upon truculent governments; and secondly, the federal commission of five should be "recomposed with care" and the diet itself "revived and reorganized," so that the measures recommended to it would be pushed through. These proposals found fairly complete embodiment in a new *Denkschrift* which Bernstorff, the Prussian foreign minister, had composed at about the same time and which Gentz had edited. At Bernstorff's instigation, an Austrian memoir, in whose composition Gentz likewise had had a hand, was laid before the czar at Verona, its purpose to persuade him that pressure must be exerted on the king of Württemberg.¹⁰

Immediately following the Congress of Verona, a select group of safely conservative German diplomats assembled at Vienna to arrive at some definite conclusion about what should be done. Gentz prepared two important papers setting forth the Austrian position;¹¹ and in a confidential report, which the timely arrival of a thousand ducats from Russia made particularly worth while, he summarized concisely for Nesselrode the measures that appeared desirable from the Austrian

⁹ In January Gentz had taken issue with this paper in the columns of the *Beobachter. Tagebücher*, 3:6.

¹⁰ Eugen Guglia, "Eine ungedruckte Denkschrift von Gentz aus dem Jahre 1822," in the *Historische Vierteljahrsschrift*, 3 (1900):504-507; *Tagebücher*, 3:119.

¹¹ "Über die zum Schutze der Ordnung und Ruhe in der Bundesverfassung liegenden Mittel," published by Guglia in the *Historische Vierteljahrsschrift*, 3 (1900):511-519, and "Entwurf eines Präsidialvortrags über die Aufrechterhaltung der Pressgesetze," given in Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:317, 318; Heyck, *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 214, 215.

point of view.¹² They included a change in the procedure of the diet to eliminate useless talk; publication of only the results of the diet, so that divergence of views would not be advertised; limitation of sessions to four months in each year; clarification of the supremacy of the diet over the various diets in the states; action to halt the publication of the transactions of legislative bodies in the constitutional states; and above all a tightening of press regulations. On this last point Gentz wanted to proceed more drastically than did Bernstorff or even Metternich; but in the end it was decided merely to recommend that the press committee at the diet punish a few newspapers in Stuttgart.¹³

The Württemberg government was in too belligerent a mood to be impressed by these half measures and refused to join the chorus of praise with which, at Austria's behest, the Verona circular had been greeted at Frankfurt. Too late did the Stuttgart authorities realize their mistake. A humble retraction in the *Stuttgarter Hofzeitung* was not enough. In a dispatch written by Gentz,¹⁴ Austria demanded either the recall of Wangenheim, Württemberg's representative at the diet, or that he be instructed to answer the Verona circular as had the other German courts. When Württemberg declined to follow either of these courses, Austria, Prussia, and—to the chagrin of the king of Württemberg—Russia, withdrew their representatives from Stuttgart. The king had depended on Russia. Austria requested France also to recall her minister, but since it did not appear seemly that France should mix in German affairs,¹⁵ she was to base her action on the anti-Bourbonism fostered at Stuttgart.

The dispatch to Paris presenting this request was written by Gentz, and is a document of great interest.¹⁶ Gentz pictured the king of Württemberg as a man who would have liked to play Napoleon. Before 1815, as crown prince, he had envisaged the extension of Württemberg across the Rhine: "Alsace would have formed the bulwark of Germany, and the line of the Vosges would have marked the frontier of Württemberg's domain"; but the peace of 1815 "killed his ideas of conquest."

¹² "Note confidentielle sur les affaires de l'Allemagne," S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105; *Tagebücher*, 3:137.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 149; Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:318.

¹⁴ Dispatch to Oechsner, March 8, 1823, original in Gentz's hand, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105; *Tagebücher*, 3:161-162.

¹⁵ Russia had not said a word about the recall of Wangenheim either. Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:320.

¹⁶ Dispatch to Vincent, April 17, 1823, the original in Gentz's hand, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105. A fragment toward the end of the dispatch is printed in Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere* 4:32-33. See also *Tagebücher*, 3:175-176.

Turning to liberalism, he sought "to unite the enjoyment of absolute power with the simulacrum of a free constitution." The radicals, however, turned the tables on him; they made the king their plaything and Stuttgart the center of the revolutionary press. "*Un certain nombre d'anciens valets de Bonaparte*" attained great influence. Among them was Lindner, formerly an agent of Napoleon and "one of the cleverest revolutionaries of Germany"; he it was who had been "the prime cause of the assassination of Kotzebue, through his theft at Weimar of a report addressed by Kotzebue to the court of Russians, and by the unfortunate publicity that he gave to it." Others of the same stripe were Le Bret, Malchus,¹⁷ and De Trott.¹⁸ The press of Württemberg reflected the peculiarly anti-Bourbon attitude of this clique around the king. For whereas most liberal newspapers of Germany had a *national* overtone, those of Württemberg, together with Cotta's *Allgemeine Zeitung* of Augsburg and the publications of the brothers Murhard at Frankfurt,¹⁹ were primarily anti-Bourbon. The *Deutsche Beobachter* at Stuttgart was particularly biased, and one wondered how the French representative could "sojourn in a capital where his government is constantly maltreated." In Paris these pleas found a favorable reception and were met halfway: the French representative at Stuttgart departed for an indefinite time.²⁰

All this took the king of Württemberg quite by surprise, but Vienna was not yet through with him. It had been decided earlier to institute action at Frankfurt against the most objectionable newspapers in his realm, and with this end in view Gentz made excerpts from the *Deutsche Beobachter* with appropriate comments.²¹ His work ran to fifty-four manuscript pages. The *Deutsche Beobachter*, he declared, was unique. It did not stop with subtleties and half-statements, it did not attack this or that institution or this or that government; it assaulted "the entire structure." To the *Beobachter*, Bonald, the conservative French publicist, was an obscurantist and factionist, and Everett, the American, a hero, because he represented "general revolution as unavoidable and

¹⁷ See *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (55 vols., Leipzig, 1875-1910), 20:130-132.

¹⁸ As prefect in Westphalia, De Trott had walked off with the money of his department at the approach of the allies. He was brought to trial, condemned, and went to Württemberg, where he got "a favorable reception and even the personal protection of the king." With more than ordinary talent and "a spirit which was at the same time cultivated and adventurous," he was now, as Staatsrat, the real minister of foreign affairs in the country. Dispatch to Vincent, April 17, 1823, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105.

¹⁹ See *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, 23:62-65.

²⁰ Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:320.

²¹ "Auszüge aus dem deutschen Beobachter von dessen Erscheinung in September, 1822, bis zu Ende des April, 1823," S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105; *Tagebücher*, 3:182-183.

necessary.”²² It defined revolution as the seizure of just rights by a free people, and rebellion as the uprising of slaves against masters. Authoritarian monarchy, it insinuated, sought to enslave free people. “Right remains always on the side of the rebels,” Gentz pointed out. The *Neckar Zeitung*, he went on to say in a memoir that summarized his conclusions and suggested the sort of report the *Bundes-Commission* should lay before the Federal Diet,²³ was simply “the older sister” of *Deutsche Beobachter*. One could well dispense with both papers.

Gentz was not yet satisfied. In Paris the *Journal des débats*, which was generally considered to be close to Chateaubriand, criticized the suppression of what it termed one of the best political papers “not only of Germany, but of Europe.” Gentz wrote to Vincent, Austrian ambassador to France, to ask whether he could not get Chateaubriand either to do something about the *Journal des débats* or to indicate publicly that he did not sympathize with its attitude. Regardless of Chateaubriand’s reaction, the step indicates the importance Gentz placed upon control of the press. He believed that the Continental powers should maintain a united front on censorship, which he termed “the supreme law of the Confederation [of Europe].” Should discord prevail on this question, all other success would be but illusory “patchwork.” “Viewed from this standpoint, the suppression of the *Deutsche Beobachter* was a more important event to me,” he said, “than the conquest of Spain.”²⁴

The Austrian campaign of the first half of 1823 had been successful. The king of Württemberg, to be sure, still refused “to pay court to those powers,”²⁵ and their representatives, in consequence, remained away from Stuttgart; but Wangenheim at any rate had been replaced (but by the calumniated Trott!), and Lepel, another objectionable character, had been recalled by the Kassel government. That was very fine, but Gentz, flushed with victory, now wanted more. Hanover could surely send a better representative to Frankfurt than Hammerstein; and Carlowitz, “over his ears in liberalism,” was no person to represent Saxony.²⁶ And though Germany seemed fairly well purged “of revo-

²² Brockhaus brought out anonymously a book by Everett under the title *Europa oder Übersicht der Lage der europäischen Hauptmächte im Jahre 1821*. The work was translated by Staatsrat von Jakob and the publisher was announced as K. F. Kunz of Bamberg. Brockhaus, *Die Firma Brockhaus*, 39.

²³ “Grundzüge zu einem Commissions-Gutachten über den deutschen Beobachter und die Neckar Zeitung,” S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105.

²⁴ Gentz to Vincent, June 24, 1823, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105; *Tagebücher*, 3:197; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:148.

²⁵ Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:323.

²⁶ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 56-57.

lutionary chiefs and agents," Lausanne, Paris, and Brussels remained. Why could not the monarchs do something about those places too? Why should not a definitive congress be held next September, at Milan?²⁷

Though these high-flown plans were not carried out, 1824 was to see the completion of the policy launched in the first months of the preceding year. Before 1823 was over, some of the most objectionable writers — notably Lindner and Murhard — had taken to the road.²⁸ The chief task, however, was to secure a renewal of the Karlsbad decrees at the *Bundestag*. The ground had been so carefully prepared that everything moved as Vienna desired. The basis for the *Präsidialvertrag* was a paper drawn up by none other than Zentner of Bavaria, who had caused no little trouble in 1819; Gentz thought it very fine to be able to decorate the document "with this bird's feather." Baron Muench, the new Austrian representative at Frankfurt, worked up the address as it was to be given; it was then edited by Gentz, who confined himself in the main to touching up the style. He had every reason to be pleased, however, because Muench had made extensive use not only of Zentner's paper but of the memoir Gentz had prepared for the conferences at Vienna in January, 1823; in some passages, indeed, Muench had incorporated his very words.²⁹ In addition, when the news came that "the second portion of Karlsbad water" had gone down easily at Frankfurt, Metternich acknowledged in a "flattering and touching way" the part that Gentz "had had in this victory through all periods of the fight."³⁰

Throughout the whole period under discussion, the most important newspaper in Germany was the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, published at Augsburg by Cotta. Cotta had great political influence in Germany: ambassadors quoted him as though he were a minister of state. During the constitution fight in Württemberg he had worked in close accord with the king, Wangenheim, and the rest of that Stuttgart party which had been anathema to Gentz. Nevertheless he attempted to give his newspaper the appearance of impartiality, and contributors of varying shades of opinion were welcomed. It ranked among the wonders of the times that the *Allgemeine Zeitung* was allowed to circulate in Austria, for Cotta's own liberal particularism, which gave way gradually to liberal

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 58, 62.

²⁸ Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:324, 329.

²⁹ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 133-137; Guglia, "Eine ungedruckte Denkschrift von Gentz," in the *Historische Vierteljahrsschrift*, 3:511-519; Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:335, 769-770.

³⁰ *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:173.

nationalism, persisted in peeking through. "Among the Austrian political newspapers," the Prussian ambassador remarked, "the *Allgemeine Zeitung* appears like a rich, powerful, spirited, intelligent man in the midst of starved and stupid beggars."³¹

The unique position of privilege that Cotta's paper occupied in Austria was a tribute not only to the unparalleled excellence of the *Zeitung* itself, but to Cotta's gifts as a negotiator. It was no mean task to stay on the good side of the Vienna authorities without making the paper an organ for the expression of the Austrian point of view exclusively. Cotta accomplished this difficult feat by establishing the best sort of connections in Vienna. He had sought to win Gentz as a regular contributor, but Gentz wanted no such binding relationship.³² He wrote for the paper occasionally, and the articles he published in the *Oesterreichische Beobachter* were reprinted at once in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*. In place of Gentz, Cotta, with great secrecy, had persuaded Pilat to write the Austrian articles, which appeared anonymously.

Nevertheless Cotta had his troubles. He claimed that Pilat continually warned of the imminent suppression of the *Zeitung* in order to mulct more money from its owner.³³ To what extent Pilat's reports were true, and to what degree Gentz may have been responsible for making them so, is hard to determine. Although Gentz told Pilat in 1822 that he had never favored suppression of the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, nevertheless in 1820 he had reminded Metternich that the time might be ripe to exclude it from Austria.³⁴ In general, Gentz's statements about the paper were so equivocal that it is difficult to fathom what he actually thought should be done. Without doubt he was frequently irritated by the policy of a paper whose reputation for neutrality was "merited neither by the purity of its intentions nor by the authenticity of its news."³⁵ He did not hesitate to complain directly to Cotta, and that excellent businessman,³⁶ out to make money as well as to defend principles, was not too proud to heed the voice from Vienna.

In 1821 Gentz reminded Cotta that attacks on the House of Rothschild were attacks on the Austrian credit. The editor of the *Zeit-*

³¹ Erwin Hölzle, "Cotta, der Verleger, und die Politik," in the *Historische Vierteljahrschrift*, 29 (1935):576-596; Maltzahn to Bernstorff, June 24, 1830, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 92, Maltzahn Papers.

³² Salomon, *Geschichte des Zeitungswesens*, 2:152-153.

³³ Heyck, *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 255-256.

³⁴ *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:101; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 1-2.

³⁵ Mémoire . . . sur les moyens de réprimer les abus de la presse," S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105.

³⁶ Weldler-Steinberg, *Rahel Varnhagen*, 476-477.

ung, Stegemann, had to promise Cotta that in the future “*nothing whatever* relating to the value of Austrian public securities, and *nothing whatever* relating to Mr. Rothschild (at least as affecting his relations with Austria)” would be printed.³⁷ But the paper continued to exasperate Vienna, partly, perhaps, because the Bavarian government hesitated to take drastic action for fear Cotta would move his business elsewhere. In 1826 Gentz sent an out-and-out threat to Cotta via Spiegel, the Austrian representative at Munich. Only Cotta’s repeated promises to bar from his columns anything unpalatable to Vienna had kept the paper from being barred long ago from Austria, he said. In the past months, however, “such bitter hate against all the old order” had been displayed that the Austrian monarchy was considering seriously whether “the entire reading class of its subjects” could be allowed to form “their judgments regarding world events day after day” from such a paper. This letter alarmed Cotta so much that he made a special trip to Vienna, where he conferred with Metternich, Gentz, and Pilat. Few journeys of his industrious life had been “so satisfying” as this one, he said. The future held in store new annoyances from Vienna, but Cotta’s paper kept its head above water; and it is significant to note that with Metternich’s fall in 1848 the *Allgemeine Zeitung* lost its old power.³⁸

Notwithstanding Gentz’s constant concern with the affairs of Cotta, it must be said that his general interest in the German press waned after the successful administration of “the second portion of Karlsbad water” in 1824. After this victory his utterances and actions betray preoccupation with other matters. But when he did speak out on Germany in the years immediately following, it was the vein of 1824. “Our strongest and most energetic fight,” he wrote to Metternich in 1825, “must be directed against the *overpowerfulness of the press*. . . . This conviction is inscribed in my soul more deeply than ever.” And in 1826 he informed Pilat that freedom of the press “alone could destroy us. I therefore consider a censor, at once strong and skillfully organized, as the first of all our spiritual and political needs—and in consequence [I look upon] every consideration of *economy* that opposes a thoroughgoing reform of this . . . vital institution not merely as petty, but as senseless and criminal.”³⁹

³⁷ Corti, *Rise of the House of Rothschild*, 266; Heyck, *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 252.

³⁸ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, p. 26; Dispatch to Spiegel, March 30, 1828, S. A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105; Heyck, *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 255–256; Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:343.

³⁹ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt 2, p 164; Gentz to Pilat, September [2?], 1826, S.A., Vienna, Nachlass Gentz, 23.

Gentz did not believe, however, that merely coercive measures could save the conservative system. He might storm when a Mannheim editor presumed to "oppose *his views* and *his opinion* to those of the French government and its allies"; and in his more rigidly conservative moments he might sigh for a pope so confirmed in his Romanism that he *must* strive for the "apparently impossible." He was capable even of condoning the inane brutalities of a Ferdinand VII, in the foolish supposition that "it is always less difficult to win an ultra-monarch over to moderation than to bring anyone enamored of liberalism back to sound principles." But he never wholly forgot that "statutory restrictions . . . alone are insufficient to counteract the preponderance of the evil, once it exists. Positive measures," he told Metternich, "must likewise be brought forth." And there will be no "true quiet, no ensured possession, no enjoyment of that which has been acquired by Europe," he informed Pilat, "unless the moral as well as the material preponderance of authority over all individual disturbances is guaranteed by great and comprehensive measures."⁴⁰

The task of establishing adequate coercive machinery was comparatively simple, despite the trivial objections a miserly government might advance from time to time; but to gain "moral preponderance" over the evil forces of liberalism was another matter. Gentz had his ideas on how to make a beginning, and he brought them to Metternich's attention. He asked Metternich to consider the possibility of making Austria a haven for those men best able to foster the conservative cause. Why could not the government establish a substantial fund and reward able journalists, for instance, in amounts commensurate with the magnitude of their services? They could be associated in some first-rate enterprise comparable to the French *Conservateur*.⁴¹ Little resulted from this proposal except that Dr. Pfeilschifter, who was editing the *Staatsmann* at Frankfurt, was awarded a salary of two thousand gulden.

Still earlier, in another connection, Gentz had suggested a "positive remedy" which he thought would do much to restore a healthful social order; but that plan had also been received indifferently.⁴² It called for a more careful integration of the aims of education with the aims of the state. His attention had been directed to this subject in July, 1821,

⁴⁰ Gentz to Tettenborn, March 26, 1823, in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Varnhagen Nachlass; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:148, 153; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 44-46, 81.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 44-46. See also *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 348-349, 351-352, 356-357; *Tagebücher*, 2:475, 488, 489; 3:150-152.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 169.

when a dispute between the censor officials and the *Studien-Hofkommission* over the advisability of using a work by Professor Schnabel of Prague, as a text for courses in public law, was referred to him. After a leisurely study of the question Gentz came to the conclusion that Schnabel's was "a thoroughly reprehensible work, based on false concepts, leading to the most dangerous consequences, and in striking disagreement with the principles of public law consistently adhered to, and up to this time recognized, in the Austrian state and in practice." His study of this book, Gentz went on to say, had brought forcibly to his attention the importance of the whole textbook question, and he thought the prohibition of the Schnabel book was by no means enough; one should stride on to the "introduction of other measures of greater comprehensiveness." He announced his intention of addressing a *Vortrag* to the emperor, pointing out the danger inherent in "the present condition of our educational system."⁴³ Whether these plans were sabotaged before they reached the emperor or whether they reached him and were turned down, is not known; but we have Gentz's own word that nothing came of his proposals.⁴⁴

It is to the credit of Gentz, irrespective of the wisdom of the specific measures that he recommended, that he showed at least some insight into one of the fundamental issues of Austrian politics: Austria's future role in Middle Europe depended upon the establishment of the moral preponderance of Austrian principles, whatever those principles were or were to be. The Hofburg consistently evaded this issue. It lacked the imagination to see that the *Polizeistaat* had become an anachronism. And in spite of certain items on the credit side of his ledger, it cannot be said that the Gentz of the twenties rose far above his surroundings.

One of the most significant developments then taking place in Germany was the extension of Prussia's economic influence through the *Zollverein*. Gentz read Adam Smith all over again, watched approvingly while his friend Adam Müller tried to undermine the tariff union, and once condemned publicly Friedrich List's views as a disgrace to "the famed enlightenment of the age."⁴⁵ But that was all, and that was not nearly imaginative enough. Preoccupied with the political trivia that demanded his daily attention, Gentz stood in grave danger of becoming merely a useful routineer. He accepted the new leaders in the

⁴³ Gentz to Sedlnitzky, January 15, 1822, "Confidentiellles Schreiben," S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (31K) 95; *Tagebücher*, 3:4.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 169, 359. See also Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 2:398-399.

⁴⁵ Baxa, *Adam Müller*, 374; *Tagebücher*, 2:56; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 2, pt. 2, p. 6, note.

financial world without reflection, as the means whereby an ever needy politician could turn an easy thaler; but when he had to look at the new industrial machinery, he did not bother to suppress his yawn.⁴⁶

The term "Biedermeier" originally applied in derision to the unimaginative practicality and restricted outlook of a certain type of "little man," has more recently been given a wider application: it is increasingly used as a descriptive term for the way of life and the outlook on life characteristic of Germany, but more particularly of Austria, in the period 1815-30.

The middle class put its stamp on the Biedermeier epoch. The domestic virtues were stressed. A quiet life in one's home, in one's garden, with a congenial group of friends assembling occasionally to play chamber music, to read poetry, to converse: such was the Biedermeier way. Politically, the Biedermeier period was one of resignation. The ideals that had aroused enthusiasm during the Revolutionary period were remembered, but a widely felt need for a period of repose led men to docile acceptance of the conservative policies of the Metternich government. The Biedermeier expressed the mood of men who, after the storms of youth, had decided to come to terms with life.

Friedrich Gentz, in the years succeeding the congresses, ordered his life after the Biedermeier fashion, and found it good. "*Eines nur ist Glück hienieden, Eines: des Innern stiller Frieden*," a poet of the Biedermeier had written.⁴⁷ Gentz, in complete accord, noted: "My diary is becoming more empty and more simple, and my life *appears* the same. But it has been long since I have had a better time or enjoyed a more active *inner* life."⁴⁸

Gentz had at last attained economic security. Still, though his income was large, it would not have been large enough had he not renounced gambling, fashionable ladies, and the other distractions of high society: his tastes, though different, were still expensive. He was content now to withdraw into studious seclusion. Surrounded by luxuries, he devoted himself to practical labors and quiet pleasures.

⁴⁶ See Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere*, 4:555-556; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:276, 283.

⁴⁷ Quoted by Paul Kluckhohn in "Biedermeier als literarische Epochenbezeichnung," in the *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 13 (1935): 15. Of the many articles on various aspects of the Biedermeier that have appeared in this periodical in the past ten years, I have found Kluckhohn's discussion the most useful. See also Heinrich Ritter von Srbik, *Deutsche Einheit: Idee und Wirklichkeit vom Heiligen Reich bis Königgrätz* (2d ed., 2 vols., Munich, 1936), 1:286-287.

⁴⁸ *Tagebücher*, 4:196.

The soft, sensual man of the world who looks out from the portrait painted by Thomas Lawrence had given way to the rather eccentric voluptuary of whom Grillparzer has left an obviously touched-up description. "I went to Gentz's home," Grillparzer writes. "The floor of the reception room was covered with padded carpets, so that with each step one sank as in a bog and got a sort of seasickness. On all the tables and chests of drawers stood glass bowls containing preserved fruit for the sybaritic master of the house to nibble on when he chose. In the bedroom, finally, Gentz himself was lying on a snow-white bed in a gray silk dressing gown. All around were gadgets and conveniences. Movable arms brought pen and ink nearer when needed. A writing desk moved about automatically. I believe that even the chamber pot offered itself for use at the press of a feather," Grillparzer added with a touch of the Teutonic insight that gave him preeminence among the writers of Austria. Grillparzer, however, was no friendly observer: Gentz had wanted to keep the dramatist's famous *König Ottokars Glück und Ende* from being either published or produced.⁴⁹

Leopold von Ranke, while working at Vienna in 1827–28, received Gentz's friendly assistance and made a practice of visiting him punctiliously once a week. Ranke's memory of Gentz was more sympathetic, his description more humdrum, than Grillparzer's. "He always made on me the impression of earnestness, of profundity, of complete devotion to his calling and to his duty," wrote Ranke, recalling no doubt how Gentz actually was. "I never noticed a trace of frivolity."⁵⁰ There appears, indeed, to have been no frivolity. "One saw him seldom, even at the home of Metternich," Andlaw wrote. "He visited a circle of trusted friends, and with the years his shyness before all strangers and everything out of the ordinary increased."⁵¹

Gentz had learned the joys of cultivating his garden, in both the literal and the symbolic sense. At Weinhaus — now a part of Vienna, but at that time a village in the outskirts — he had purchased a small coun-

⁴⁹ Grillparzer's *sämtliche Werke*, edited by August Sauer (20 vols., Stuttgart, n. d.), 19:155; Mayr, *Geschichte der oesterreichischen Staatskanzlei*, 42; August Ehrhard, *Franz Grillparzer* (Munich, 1902), 342–345.

⁵⁰ L. v. Ranke, *Zur eigenen Lebensgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1890), 639. Further information on Gentz's relations to the famous historian may be found in Gentz's *Tagebücher*, 4:329, 335–338, 348, 358, 367, 384, 426; Paul Wittichen, "Briefe Rankes an Gentz," in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, 93:76–88; Friedrich C. Wittichen, "Briefe von Gentz an Ranke," in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, 98:329–336; Gentz to Bombelles, September 20, 1828, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, 95. The last is an interesting letter of introduction that Gentz gave Ranke when he went from Vienna to Rome.

⁵¹ Franz Freiherr von Andlaw, *Mein Tagebuch: Auszüge aus Aufschreibungen der Jahren 1811 bis 1861* (Frankfurt, 1862), 1:260–261.

try place where he established himself in the spring and stayed as long as possible. With typical *Gründlichkeit* he went at his gardening systematically, studying botany under the director of a tutor.

His friends were pious people. Pilat, who lived near him at Weinhaus in the summer, was one of the arch-Catholics of Vienna, and Pilat's home was generally looked upon as the rallying point for the clerical party. Maltzahn spoke of Pilat's circle as "the real Vienna congregation," and Gentz was generally regarded as one of the chief cogs in this spiritual society. Nevertheless, he could not muster any of the tense religious excitement of the other devotees of the cult, and to the end he hewed to a middle line between Catholicism and Protestantism.⁵² The indecisiveness that early in his life had seemed to indicate merely perplexity and doubt was dignified at last into something approaching the nobility of a pragmatic synthesis.

The majestic beauty of the Alps had come to have a great attraction for Gentz, and late in the summer he was wont to set out for some spot that combined healing springs with fine scenery. The gout, from which he had long been a sufferer, bothered him increasingly with the years; but he derived a certain satisfaction from his ills. His letters are full of miseries, doctors, quacks, and cures. Gastein, his favorite resort was situated in one of the loveliest spots of the Salzburg region. Then a secluded and little-frequented retreat, it satisfied his new-found love of solitude. His solitude, however, was of his own kind, for he liked his domestic comforts, and on one occasion was accompanied on his vacation by a retinue of no less than eleven servants.

Though Gentz had without doubt become a fine gentleman, he was not by any means a gentleman of leisure. He worked very hard, for Metternich now leaned upon him for help in all phases of his work.⁵³ But he was allowed to arrange his schedule about as he pleased. He conferred with Metternich almost every day in the famous building on the Ballhausplatz, where the Congress of Vienna had met, where Doll-

⁵² Maltzahn to Bernstorff, June 24, 1830, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 92, Maltzahn Papers; Mayr, *Geschichte der oesterreichischen Staatskanzlei*, 106.

⁵³ A memoir of 1820, which is preserved in the Vienna archives in its various stages, illustrates particularly well how Gentz and Metternich worked together. The original sketch in Metternich's handwriting is merely a rough outline indicating the main points that he wanted brought out. The draft that Gentz then prepared, and which may be seen in his handwriting, is identical, except for the insertion of two words by Metternich, with the finished copy, which was sent to Hardenberg in Berlin and returned. The style and the bulk of the argument had been left completely to Gentz. Here one finds an illustration for Srbik's shrewd observation that one might perhaps speak more properly of Gentz's system than of Metternich's system. S.A., Vienna, Preussen Collectanea, 4. See also Mayr, *Geschichte der oesterreichischen Staatskanzlei*, 149.

fuss was to be murdered. On the upper floors lived Metternich with his family; below swarmed the busy minor officials in their offices. Gentz usually visited Metternich at breakfast. They thrashed out the day's business, and then Gentz, a bundle of dispatches under his arm, more often than not fled back to the comfort of his snowy-white bed, his gray silk dressing gown, and the innumerable convenient gadgets that had so impressed Grillparzer. Even the key to the secret code might go home with him, to the despair of the underlings, but Metternich did not object. He had come to regard the vagaries of his aide with the tolerant amusement that he might reserve for the whims of a faithful old retainer.

Gentz's capacity for amusing Metternich goes far to explain the success of their long cooperation. In a letter to his son Victor in Paris Metternich wrote: "M. de Gentz has given the lamp to Antoinette, but don't say anything about it to Count Apponyi. Gentz has been frightened by the shape of this lamp; he doesn't like the Gothic since all the Goths are dead. I have promised to indemnify him for the lamp with *chocolate*. Send me some boxes of artistically molded bonbons. Gentz would give the Strasburg Cathedral for a good piece of chocolate."⁵⁴

The principles of a conservative who would trade the Strasburg Cathedral for a piece of chocolate might be regarded as open to question. Metternich was soon to learn that such was the case.

⁵⁴ Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere*, 4:413. See also *Les Rapports diplomatiques de Lebzeltern, ministre d'Autriche à la cour de Russie, 1816-1828*, edited by Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhailovitch (St. Petersburg, 1913), 282-304.

THE CLOSING YEARS
1828-1832

21. Fanny Elssler

BY 1828 Gentz seemed to have achieved a design for living that would suit him until the end of his days. His work, his friends, his aches and pains, his income, his household, his quiet pleasures provided him with about all that a man of sixty-four ordinarily asks of the world. Then suddenly his economic props collapsed around him. The outbreak of war between Russia and Turkey disrupted his lucrative Wallachian connection, and he was faced with a reorganization of all the domestic arrangements from which he drew his real satisfaction in life. In September, 1828, he had to inform Metternich that if something were not done to increase his income, he would be compelled to retire from public service and lead the secluded, simple life that his limited means demanded.¹

Metternich responded to this appeal with encouraging vigor. He immediately persuaded the emperor to lend Gentz forty-five hundred gulden, which at Christmas was made over into an outright gift.² Gentz had meanwhile succeeded in mulcting three thousand gulden from his erstwhile connections in the Principalities, and had negotiated a loan from some well-disposed friend. But this aid served merely as a stop-gap; for in February, 1829, after writing a paper for Rothschild on the political situation, Gentz asked for two thousand florins, which Rothschild was so good as to hand over "with the most amiable readiness."³ Thus Gentz once more had occasion to verify the handsome tribute he had paid the Rothschilds in 1826, in the article he had written on the family for Brockhaus' encyclopedia: "Ever ready to lend a helping hand . . . to those who come to them for assistance, all of the five Rothschild brothers have achieved a real popularity."⁴

¹ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, p. 330.

² *Ibid.*, 331; receipts, September 26, December 27, 1828, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, 105.

³ *Tagebücher von Friedrich von Gentz*, edited by August Fournier and A. Winkler (Leipzig and Vienna, 1920), 33, 35. These diaries cover the years 1829, 1830, and 1831; they will be cited hereafter as *Tagebücher*, volume 5.

⁴ Corti, *Rise of the House of Rothschild*, 341.

The aid that arrived for Gentz in the latter part of 1828 enabled him to shuffle along through the following year; he also picked up money on the side from the English and Prussian governments. Concerning these latter connections he does not have much to say, but however generous the foreign governments may have been, they were not generous enough to keep Gentz in 1829 from again seeing the specter of retirement. Later in the year Metternich reacted coldly to his troubles, and in October Gentz had to borrow money to pay his rent. One of his servants at about the same time was buying a farm! Finally in the spring of 1830 his affairs had come to such a pass that he had to appeal desperately to the government to help him out again.⁵

The crisis appears to have been directly brought on in this way: Prince Esterhazy, reputed to be the richest man in Austria, had nine years before made a loan to Gentz. Esterhazy had never tried to collect the sum, and Gentz evidently looked upon it as the sort of "loan" a wealthy gentleman traditionally made to a notoriously impecunious friend. Prince Esterhazy, however, had himself fallen into financial difficulties. In his desperation, and without saying a word to Gentz, Esterhazy turned his friend's note over to a certain Madame Plaiden, a vixen, who went to work resolutely to make Gentz pay. Gentz succeeded in making an agreement with the Madame to pay one thousand florins semiannually; and the gift from the emperor in December, 1828, had helped carry him through 1829. But on January 1, 1830, he was able to raise but five hundred florins, and Madame Plaiden promptly threatened him with a lawsuit and seizure of his property. Gentz needed substantial aid, and he appealed to the government to raise his annual salary from four thousand to ten thousand florins and to give him twelve thousand florins outright to pay his debts.⁶

Metternich was not prepared to ask the emperor for anything quite so munificent, but after emphasizing that "a man who has once been so deeply initiated into the political movement of a great state as Gentz has been can no more be let out," he finally recommended that Gentz's salary be increased to eight thousand florins and that a special appropriation be set aside to pay his more urgent obligations. The recommendation was accepted by the emperor who awarded "for the payment of

⁵ *Tagebücher*, 5:107-111, 128, 139, 365; Guglia, *Gentz*, 44; *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 1:107.

⁶ "Tableau des dettes du Chev. de Gentz, classifiées d'après l'urgence de leur payement," S.A., Vienna, Interiora, 105; *Tagebücher*, 5:150-152, 164; Count Egon Caesar Corti, *The Reign of the House of Rothschild*, translated by Brian and Beatrix Lunn (New York, 1928), 36; Hans Schlitter, "Aus den letzten Lebensjahren von Gentz," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für oesterreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 13 (1892):322-326.

his pressing debts the amount of six thousand gulden, once for all time, and in no circumstances to be exceeded." In spite of this last very definite statement, when the gift came it amounted to eight thousand, four hundred gulden, and very quickly thereafter "the more pressing debts" were disposed of.⁷

An interesting aspect of the whole affair is the way in which Gentz's obligations to bankers were passed over. His debts included three thousand florins that Rothschild, "at the desire of P. de M. [Metternich]," had recently advanced to him. "A word from His Highness [Metternich]," the statement ran, "will be sufficient for R. [Rothschild] not to insist for a long time on this payment, perhaps even never." But the three thousand florins, a friendly loan, were but drops in the bucket in comparison with Gentz's total obligations to the "Rothschilds and other bankers," which were estimated to be "perhaps five times the sum the emperor is willing to grant"; that is to say, his obligations to bankers might amount to between thirty and forty thousand gulden. These obligations, however, were to be absolutely ignored; first, because they were so great, and second, "because the Chevalier de Gentz considers them as donations pure and simple, and is convinced that he will not be disturbed in the future on these various counts."⁸ The attitude here displayed is of interest not only for the light it throws on Gentz, but perhaps more so for the somewhat nonchalant indifference with which his connections with the financial interests were viewed officially. Metternich's own discrimination in matters of this kind was not always above reproach.⁹

An advance of fifteen hundred florins made to Gentz by the chancellery of state formed one of the most considerable obligations to be paid out of the special gift from the emperor. Since Gentz found it impossible to pay more than nine hundred florins outright on this debt, it was arranged that the remainder should be deducted from his future salary. The fact that he had to appeal twice for a postponement of this relatively small payment, which he finally took care of but a short time

⁷ *Ibid.*, 320-322. Gentz to the Zählamt, May 26, 1830; a receipt dated May 27, 1830, signed by Count Louis Lebzeltern; and "Sommes reçues de S.A. . . . Metternich par la voie de S. E. le Comte de Lebzeltern," an itemized account by Gentz of how he disposed of the 8,400 florins, are to be found in S.A., Vienna, Interiora, 105. See also *Tagebücher*, 5:171-172.

⁸ "Tableau des dettes du Chev. de Gentz," S.A., Vienna, Interiora, 105; Lebzeltern to Metternich, October 26, 1830, and [Metternich?] to Lebzeltern, January 31, 1831, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, 105.

⁹ Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 59, 103; Kübeck, *Tagebücher*, 1:382; Buckland, *Metternich and the British Government*, 185; Bibl, *Zerfall Oesterreichs*, 1:193; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:456.

before his death in 1832, indicates the disorder into which his private affairs had fallen.¹⁰

Gentz now snatched in vain at every sort of political hack work that promised either temporary or permanent relief. Lord Cowley, the English ambassador at Vienna, helped him out occasionally; but Gentz's attempt to get something really substantial from London appears not to have been successful.¹¹ Count Orloff, in 1830, interceded for him at St. Petersburg; this court had been helpful in the past, but whether or not it again reacted generously is unknown.¹² What is known is that the Rothschilds remained faithful, and Gentz became a formal agent of that House, delivering frequent memoirs on public affairs and receiving an annual stipend of ten thousand florins.¹³

There were also a miscellany of political adventurers and seekers-after-favors with whom Gentz associated himself, for the usual pittance, during the last years of his life. In 1829, for instance, the son of Gustav IV of Sweden was in Vienna, parading the title "Prince Vasa" and ardently pretending to the Swedish throne. Gentz became his confidential adviser.¹⁴ He likewise interested himself in the perennial controversy between Baden and Bavaria.¹⁵ The pretensions of the House of Löwenstein to the throne of Bavaria secured his attention, as did the policies desired by the Duke of Nassau.¹⁶ And the very last letter known to exist from Gentz's pen concerned a very secret negotiation by the exiled Duke Karl of Brunswick to recover certain property in his former duchy.¹⁷

Trivial as some of the foregoing details may appear in isolation, they

¹⁰ "Tableau des dettes du Chev. de Gentz"; "Sommes reçues," Gentz to [Lebzelttern?] October 30, 1830; Lebzelttern to Metternich, November 1, 1830; Gentz to [Lebzelttern?], November 7, 1830; receipt signed by Gentz, November 8, 1830; Gentz to [Lebzelttern?], October 27, 1831; Lebzelttern to Gentz, October 28, 1831; receipt, April 30, 1832; Gentz to [Lebzelttern?], April 26, 1832; all in the Staats-Archiv, Vienna, Interiora, 105.

¹¹ *Tagebücher*, 5:216, 217, 234, 237, 270; Fournier, "Gentz," in *Der Friede*, 3:490; Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 136-137, 141, 143-144.

¹² *Tagebücher*, 5:216, 239.

¹³ Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 58.

¹⁴ *Tagebücher*, 5:30-32, 37.

¹⁵ Gentz to Tettenborn, April 19, 1830, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105; *Tagebücher*, 5:189. In connection with the earlier history of the controversy between Baden and Bavaria, see Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 5:247; Webster, *Castlereagh*, 2:117, 171, 178-179; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 1:231-232; Zwiedineck-Südenhorst, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 2:8-9; Stern, *Geschichte Europas*, 1:292-293; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 352-354.

¹⁶ Constantin Erbprinz zu Löwenstein to Gentz, August 29, 1830, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 116; Nassau to Gentz, May 17, 1831, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105; *Tagebücher*, 5:336.

¹⁷ Gentz to [?], May 12, 1832, and other correspondence relating to the same subject may be found in the Staats-Archiv, Vienna, Interiora, 105.

acquire a real significance when viewed cumulatively in their relation to the change that took place in Gentz after 1828. His real loyalty to Metternich and Austrian official policy dated from the time in 1817 when he began to enjoy economic security; once that security was destroyed, his sense of obligation to Metternich and to Austrian policy vanished.

Fortunately his chronic state of financial crisis did not overwhelm Gentz. He still possessed the astounding resiliency that had served him so frequently and so well before. Jolted out of the rut of complacent service to the cause of conservatism, he rose superior to the influence of his pious, obscurantist friends;¹⁸ he freed himself from the old widower's illusion that his own comfort was of supreme importance; he stood forth a man in the full sense of the word.

Gentz was an earthy man. He liked food, women, soft beds. He liked work and power. Often to be found skirting around the fringes of religion, he was never religious in the sectarian sense. He was afraid of death because he loved life. To God he might have turned as a last resort, but the world never failed him that badly.

So it was in 1828. With bankruptcy staring him in the face, he looked out upon the world and found it good. For the first time in years his physical ailments vanished; he felt fine. For the first time in years he became sentimentally excited about a woman, Princess Louise Schoenburg; and he spent a week writing her a letter.¹⁹ From the date of his infatuation with Louise Schoenburg, some woman almost continuously absorbed Gentz's attention; that is, from his sixty-fourth to his sixty-eighth year. "In old age women are the best and the last resort," he noted with satisfaction.²⁰

Gentz had had wide experience with women from all social classes, but he had never been dependent upon women in any spiritual sense. Women were occasional instruments that administered to his physical needs or his social ambitions, and only exceptionally did he feel any obligation for such services. Devoid of all prudishness, Gentz recorded his little adventures in a matter-of-fact tone that horrified his readers when, years later, the diaries were printed for a world that had come to make a fetish of the unmentionable.²¹ Once in a while illegitimate

¹⁸ Eugen Guglia, "Neue Briefe von Gentz," in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, 70 (1892):170.

¹⁹ *Tagebücher*, 4:388-390, 393, 395-396, 405; Gentz to Alfred Schoenburg, June 2, 1828, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, 95.

²⁰ Gentz to Wallmoden, December 11, 1829 (copy), in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Varnhagen Nachlass.

²¹ Andlaw, *Mein Tagebuch*, 1:260-261.

children appear casually in the pages of the diary, only to disappear quite as casually, forever. Typical is a note from the year 1831: "A visit from Madame Deny, an actress from Pest, who has the honor to be my daughter."²²

But after 1828 Gentz experienced a psychological change. For the first time women occupied in his life a position of central and continuous importance. His rediscovery of the loveliness of ladies brought him at first a feeling of almost dazed bewilderment. He energetically made the rounds, surveying the younger crop with a critical eye, but with undisguised delight. His friends were vastly amused. Metternich especially enjoyed the spectacle, and late in the summer of 1829, having described a brace of fine young women to Gentz with great enthusiasm, he concluded: "Between the two I would take the first [Countess Wickelburg, aged sixteen] and leave you the second [Frau von Saurau] for the true delight of your soul. Should you lay claim to both, then I'll give you both."²³

After a diplomatic mission for her husband had removed Louise Schoenburg from Gentz's admiring gaze, a lady of twenty-five named Nandine Karolyi caused a new eruption of his amatory emotions. Nandine, who two years later was to excite the youthful ardor of Napoleon's son, the Duke of Reichstadt, soon found she could dispense with the old man's adulation.²⁴ After a short interlude he formed, in the winter of 1829-30, an attachment of the most serious kind. He fell desperately in love with Fanny Elssler, one of the great ballet dancers of all time. The two years and a half of life that remained to him were enriched immeasurably by this girl, and their mutual affection made Gentz's name notorious in circles where his political accomplishments were little known.

The daughter of a humble musician who had served for many years as the indispensable factotum of Haydn, Fanny Elssler, like so many other notable figures in the artistic life of nineteenth-century Austria, was a by-product of the great Esterhazy establishment. Her training as a dancer had begun in Vienna, in early childhood, with sound instruction in the classical forms of the Parisian ballet. A somewhat extended sojourn in Italy had then brought out her individual style; and she returned to Vienna an accomplished artist in 1827.

²² *Tagebücher*, 5:275.

²³ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, p. 339.

²⁴ *Tagebücher*, 5:64, 66; Gentz to Nandine, June 27, 1829, S.A., Vienna, Nachlass Gentz, 24; G. M. Dutcher, "Napoleon II," in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 34 (1935):165.

Recognition came slowly, however, and when Gentz first took notice of her, Fanny Elssler had only a local reputation. This was in 1829, when Fanny, then nineteen years of age, was serving an engagement at the Kärntnertor Theater. During November and December Gentz attended the ballet repeatedly, and charmed with Fanny's dancing, he secured an introduction through the mediation of his friend Gallenberg, proprietor of the Kärntnertor. After the first meeting Gentz noted that Fanny Elssler was only "an ordinarily pretty burgher maiden," but he was more pleased than not at the discovery. The girl received him with friendliness, he immediately began to court her with adroit persistence, and soon he was head over heels in love.²⁵ All the evidence indicates that Fanny Elssler acquired a deep and genuine affection for Gentz, and apparently she might have become his wife for the asking.²⁶

People marveled at Gentz's luck, but they could not understand it. Gentz himself sometimes searched for an explanation in the miraculous, after the fashion of those romantic souls who talk of marriages made in heaven. But such an explanation did not satisfy him except in his more moonstruck moments, and upon at least one occasion he recounted the tale of his astoundingly successful wooing in terms largely lacking in romantic mysticism. He wrote: "The more enlightened among ordinary men think, and say . . . that my so-called eloquence alone won her. That would have been remarkable enough in itself; but it is not true by a long shot. The magic strength of my love, and that alone, won her. When she became acquainted with me, she did not know, she did not imagine, that there could be such love; and she has assured me a hundred times that . . . the revelation of a kind of love of which she had never dreamed opened a new world to her. Here, and here alone, is the key to the whole phenomenon. Naturally I never made the foolish pretension of expecting mutual love in the narrower sense of the word; I never pretended that she could fall in love with me (for my reason does not leave me even during the most intense passion). I was content to instill in her a feeling that hovered between friendship, gratitude, and love, and I really succeeded . . . in creating and strengthening this feeling in her to such a degree that it gradually came to permeate her whole being; and today, unless I am badly mistaken, no other feeling can dislodge or overwhelm it."²⁷ A nineteen-year-old girl capable of the

²⁵ *Tagebücher*, 5:134; August Ehrhard, *Fanny Elssler: Das Leben einer Tänzerin*, German edition by Moritz Necker (Munich, 1910), 1-21.

²⁶ Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:224; Ehrhard, *Fanny Elssler*, 75-77.

²⁷ Gentz to Rahel Varnhagen, October 18, 1830, in Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:205-206.

kind of devotion just described was certainly, as Gentz himself commented, "something besides an ordinary dancer."²⁸

To be sure, there are some who will say that Fanny Elssler was a cheap and easy hussy; and they will not care to argue about it. They can point out that she had borne one illegitimate child before she met Gentz, that she bore another within eleven months of Gentz's death, that she farmed out these children to be reared by comparative strangers. All this is true enough, and there were plenty of people in Fanny Elssler's lifetime who reproached her scornfully for waywardness and neglect. But the evidence indicates that Fanny's conduct was not so much the reflection of a lack of moral sense on her part, as an attempt to solve for herself the perhaps insoluble problem of the woman with a career. She regarded the responsibilities of matrimony as irreconcilable with her own artistic development; she became an artist of real distinction and a moderately successful mother. The fact remains that the Fanny Elssler whom Gentz knew had many outstandingly admirable qualities, and that she associated with him for two years and a half on a plane that never demeaned either of them.

Fanny Elssler had the good sense to realize the limitations of her upbringing. Since early childhood she had been rigorously trained in the technique of the ballet, but her schooling had otherwise been much neglected. Gentz personally supervised her liberal education. He taught her some French, sought to improve her German. "This is the only occupation which has retained any attraction for me," he confessed. The simple charm of a note she sent him one day, and which happily survives, shows what made his labors sweet: "Bon jour cher Gentz," she wrote, "tu es bien etonner, que je t'ecriez en franais, n'est ce pas? tu voir comme je suive tes conseils. . . . adieu lieber Gentz ich kusse dich deutsch und bleibe deine deutsche Fanny."²⁹

In spite of his reduced circumstances Gentz surrounded Fanny Elssler with every luxury. During her absences in Berlin, where she enjoyed the first great successes that heralded her world reputation, Gentz lived only for her return. "From now on death has no meaning for me except that of leaving the world whereon you breathe," he told her in all honesty.

At first Viennese society had observed the strange romance with amused tolerance. When it failed to collapse quickly, in accordance with the precepts of good taste, amusement gave way to disapproval

²⁸ Eckardt, *Gentz: Staatsschriften und Briefe*, 2:279-280.

²⁹ Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:220; Ehrhard, *Fanny Elssler*, 52-53.

and even the emperor expressed his annoyance. Gentz lived to see himself cold-shouldered in many of the aristocratic houses where for so long he had been at home. With time his relations with Fanny underwent a subtle change, and people remarked that she was playing fast and loose with him. There was an element of truth in this, but Gentz retained until the end the limited kind of devotion which, he was wise enough to know, was all that he could well ask of the full-blooded creature to whom he had given himself heart and soul.

Every lover is supposed to stand in need of a confidant, and Gentz had several. Chief among them was Anton Prokesch-Osten, a young man still in his thirties, to whom Gentz became very much attached. No other friend save Adam Müller ever became so intimate with Gentz as Prokesch. At once scholarly and sociable, literary and practical, Prokesch had first come to the fore as the protégé of the powerful Schwarzenberg family. This in itself was sufficient cause for Prokesch to be viewed askance by Metternich and his henchmen; but in addition Prokesch consorted at Vienna with liberal and "arty" people like Grillparzer and Franz Schubert, and declared himself committed to work all his life for the downfall of despotism.³⁰ When, during the Greek revolt, he got himself sent to the Near East as a sort of news-gatherer extraordinary, he was opposed, on obvious grounds, by both Gentz and Metternich; but he performed his task with such remarkable efficiency that he won both the admiration of Gentz and the support of Metternich.³¹

When after several years Prokesch returned to Vienna, he became intimate with Gentz at once. He fostered Gentz's new-found delight in lyric poetry, particularly in that of Heine, and he strengthened Gentz in the unpopular stand he was taking on political issues of the day. "You have given me the courage," Gentz wrote in gratitude, "to grasp and hold fast to the joys of life that fate still offers me." Prokesch retained for Gentz the highest regard, published many of his papers posthumously, and in his diary paid him the noblest of tributes: "The man whom I respected most among the living was a person of many weaknesses: Gentz. He was a man!"³²

Prokesch had interested himself in the Duke of Reichstadt; he be-

³⁰ Friedrich Engel-Janosi, "Die Jugend des Grafen Anton Prokesch-Osten," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 49 (1935):428.

³¹ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 92-93, 225, 289-292; Gentz to Metternich, December 31, 1826, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, 105; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 14.

³² Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 1:368; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 173.

friended the young man and wanted to become his tutor.³³ In Fanny Elssler's dwelling Gentz had furnished a room for himself where he did much of his work, even during Fanny's absences from Vienna. Prokesch, too, spent much time in the house, and upon several occasions messages were brought to him there by the Duke of Reichstadt's huntsman. Out of this circumstance the wide-eyed Viennese built the romantic legend that Fanny Elssler and the young duke were lovers. Actually the two never met, but the story immediately gained wide currency, and when Fanny danced in Paris a few years later she was idolized by the Bonapartists. In spite of vigorous denials by all parties concerned, the legend grew. Dumas incorporated it in his *Mohicans of Paris*, Rostand enlarged upon it in *L'Aiglon*, and it bobbed up again a few years ago in a French motion picture.³⁴

³³ Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 1:359, 388, 392, 418; *Tagebücher*, 5:218, 263; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 82, 158.

³⁴ Ehrhard, *Fanny Elssler*, 82-86.

22. Gentz the Man

PERSONAL FACTORS conditioned in decisive fashion Gentz's attitude toward public affairs between the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War in 1828 and his death in 1832. The disintegration of the financial arrangements that had given him economic security in Austria for a decade reduced his stake in the conservative system and fostered in him a critical attitude toward the things Metternich stood for; the liaison with Fanny Elssler broke his social ties with many of the fashionable aristocratic houses, whose point of view he had largely reflected; the influence of Prokesch gave him the courage to speak out in pronounced opposition to the policies of his chief and of his government.

Gentz's leftward swing did not occur suddenly. It was rather a vague shift, which expressed itself in sometimes irascible objection to certain specific policies. The position at which he arrived by the year of his death lacked the dogmatic consistency of his earlier conservatism; nevertheless it had a basic, though somewhat elastic, principle. This principle was that an intransigent maintenance of the old order had become a practical impossibility; the moment had come for the forces of conservatism to retire in good order and take their stand anew, but on a different front.

In a letter among the most widely quoted of the thousands he wrote, Gentz gave eloquent expression to his drift toward a position of resigned acceptance of the new political order. The letter was written in September, 1828, to Frau von Helvig — the Amalie Imhof of his younger days — who had broken a long silence to remonstrate with him about the stand he had been taking on public questions. Gentz's reply was written approximately when his financial affairs were approaching the first of those crises which marked his last years. "World history," he wrote, "is an eternal transition from the old to the new. In the continuous rotation of things everything destroys itself, and the fruit that has

grown to ripeness detaches itself from the plant that brought it forth. Side by side with the great and, in the long run, ever preponderating number of those who are working for the new, there must necessarily be a smaller number that seek, with moderation and purpose, to uphold the old order; this rotation will lead to the rapid downfall of everything existing." For himself, he had long ago felt called, "by virtue of the talents and means" with which nature had endowed him, to be a "defender of the old and an opponent of innovations." But all the time he knew that "the spirit of the age would in the end remain the more powerful." Despite the inevitability of ultimate defeat, however, he did not propose to shift his ground, for "only a bad soldier leaves his colors."¹

The same note of resignation is evident in a letter written a few months later to Varnhagen. "Perhaps I should have done better," he confessed, "not to leave my earlier career [of journalist]; fate threw me into another career whose illusions indemnified me for a time. Whatever I may think of that now, I have chosen my course, and must, with the consciousness of the incompleteness of that experiment, even wish to be forgotten as a writer."²

A decided change, more in mood than in ideas, is apparent in these letters to Frau von Helvig and Varnhagen. No longer did the soldier really enjoy the fight, and though Gentz was still loyal to his chief, he had begun to question his leadership. The record shows that during 1828 Gentz became more or less openly critical of Metternich; he felt particularly that Austria was not making sufficient efforts to bring London into open opposition to St. Petersburg during the Russo-Turkish campaign of 1828.³

The Russian government fortunately "arrived at the conclusion that the fall of the Turkish Empire would create more problems than it solved," and Gentz had to acknowledge that the Peace of Adrianople, which ended the war, was "the greatest luck that Europe could experience."⁴ For about a year from the time when he perceived that the war would not turn out badly, Gentz was periodically his old conservative self. He rejoiced at the ascendancy of the ultras in France, deplored every tendency to make concessions to the liberals, and consoled him-

¹ Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 5:319-322.

² *Ibid.*, 1:275.

³ Maltzahn to Bernstorff, June 29, 1828, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 81, Wien I, no. 139a, Secret Correspondence; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 317-318; Gentz to Strangford, July 5, 1828, S.A., Vienna, Nachlass Gentz, 23.

⁴ *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, 2:102-103; Gentz to Ottenfels, October 14, 1829, in Prokesch, *Zur Geschichte der orientalischen Frage: Briefe aus dem Nachlasse Friedrichs von Gentz*, 193-197. See also Krauter, *Ottenfels*, 252.

self with the thought that the "unavoidable new explosions" that were bound to occur in the world would find him dead and buried.⁵

Upon other occasions, however, he strayed off the conservative reservation and appeared to have moved into the camp of Mr. Jeremy Bentham, the English "radical." Gentz's views on the future organization of the Greek government will illustrate the point. An assortment of candidates were interested in acquiring the crown of Greece. Prince Philip of Hesse, an Austrian general who had been endorsed by England, asked Gentz's advice, and subsequently, in a letter Gentz wrote for him, announced the withdrawal of his candidacy.⁶ Prokesch could not understand why Gentz had not encouraged Philip to go after the crown, and he wrote as much to Gentz. This led Gentz in January, 1830, to make the following observations: "I find it not only deplorable but highly ridiculous . . . that they want to name a German prince as sovereign over Greece. . . . Consider the single matter of religion. . . . *Why a prince? Why a sovereign?* Greece is cut out *to be a republic*, because of its geographical situation, because of its physical construction, the character of its inhabitants, its present poverty, and because of all its antecedents; a constitution like that of Switzerland, with the difference only that a president clothed with almost unlimited power should stand at its head, is what I call a Greek government; and if the president could be a man like Mavrocordato or Trikoupes, there would remain for me nothing further to wish."⁷ Gentz may have hoped that with Mavrocordato as president of Greece he could utilize his old friendship to establish with him a relationship as advantageous as his former connection with the hospodars of Wallachia. But quite apart from this possibility, his recommendation for the future Greek government evidences the greater elasticity with which, in his last years, he interpreted the fundamental canons of his political thought.

Not until the July revolution in France, however, did Gentz directly oppose the policies of his chief. As late as June 13, 1830, he told Metternich that the wise course for Austria was "persistence in the system which we have followed in the last years."⁸ But though he might still pay lip service to the old system, he was no longer the important cog in its operation that he once had been. The easy familiarity with Metter-

⁵ *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:262, 267, 271; *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 1:105-106; Gentz to Wallmoden, December 11, 1829, in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Varnhagen Nachlass.

⁶ *Tagebücher*, 5:115; Crawley, *Greek Independence*, 175.

⁷ Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 1:325-326.

⁸ *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 346-347.

nich, which similarity of views and congeniality of taste had brought into existence, was giving way to a rather tense friendliness; and no longer did he compose a large share of the official papers.

Gentz had greeted with joy the advent to power in France of the ultraconservative Polignac; but by June, 1830, he was criticizing Polignac's policies. When the revolution broke out in July he attributed it squarely to the foolhardy policy of the French ministry. A personal acquaintance and admirer of Louis Philippe, whom he had frequently eulogized, Gentz felt incapable of displaying the proper horror over what had taken place west of the Rhine. He fell into arguments with Sedlnitzky, the ultraconservative minister of police, whose influence over Metternich he greatly feared; and he told Prokesch that he wished Sedlnitzky would break his neck.⁹

After England and Prussia had recognized the Orleans monarchy, there was at first nothing for Austria to do but to recognize it likewise, and on September 8, in a letter to Louis Philippe, written by Gentz, Emperor Francis announced his decision "not to intervene in the internal troubles of France." In spite of this conciliatory act and in spite of his confidence in the peaceful intentions of Metternich and Kolowrat—the two most powerful officials in the monarchy—Gentz was alarmed about the possibilities of war. To Prokesch he declared that the constitutional principle could no longer be held in check by the old concert-of-Europe methods; and he defended Louis Philippe as at least the representative of the monarchial idea. Louis Philippe and his following were not so consequent in their logic, Gentz admitted, as either the radicals or the ultras; but he was no longer particular about faultlessly logical political positions.¹⁰

Illustrative of Gentz's lack of any consistent, doctrinaire point of departure in forming political judgments at this period is his attitude toward the revolt in Belgium. There was no compelling reason why his reaction to the events in Belgium should not have been fairly similar to his reaction to the revolution in France. Yet such was not the case. "Force alone must subdue the Belgians," he declared. "All together they are not worth a shot of powder; and yet powder alone can bring them to reason." When, a few days later, Prokesch wrote that the constitutional principle was bound to have its day, Gentz declared that he

⁹ *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:267, 292; Viktor Bibl, *Metternich in neuer Beleuchtung* (Vienna, 1928), 31; Lord Cowley, *Diary and Correspondence*, 179, 185-186; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, p. 345; *Tagebücher*, 5:199; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 44.

¹⁰ *Tagebücher*, 5:207; Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere*, 5:30; *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 1:146; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 45, 49, 51; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:303-304.

thought so too and was glad to find someone in Vienna who agreed with him. One can only conclude that though there were moments in the last months of 1830 when Gentz's insight was profound, he actually was quite bewildered by the rapid movement of events and knew not where to turn. He could point out that the only real cause for fear was the "incurable misery of the lower classes of the people"; but since he assumed fatalistically that the misery was incurable, and in fact spoke out against reform in Austria "on account of the impossibility of carrying it through,"¹¹ he might just as well have been blind to the existence of suffering.

Perhaps because he had no truly fixed ideas on anything, Gentz for a time in 1830 was on good terms with Metternich; in October he wrote that Metternich had become almost more friendly and considerate toward him than he had ever been. An exceedingly vocal war party in Vienna, however, had by December brought Metternich almost completely over to their side.¹² That was incentive enough for Gentz to take a positive stand on a major issue once more, and with great energy he espoused the side opposite his chief.

There is much below the surface in this difference of opinion on policy. Gentz's loyalties, no less than his ideas, had been undergoing a gradual reorientation. He was no longer Metternich's man except in a perfunctory sense, but the break did not come suddenly, and it was never complete. Until the end Gentz occupied almost the position of a member of the family in the Metternich household. But since 1828 he had carried on an undercover correspondence with Kolowrat, minister of the interior and Metternich's arch enemy in the government.¹³ He consorted on congenial terms with Wessenberg and other men of moderate and sometimes liberal opinions, while his relations with his old conservative cronies were strained and uncomfortable. He repaid the Rothschilds for their constant generosity by pushing their political views with far greater enthusiasm and sincerity than he could find for Metternich's policies. It was typical that the Rothschilds and Gentz should be strong for peace, but that Metternich should be inclined toward war.

Metternich was obsessed with the idea that all revolutions resulted from the machinations of a network of secret societies, and since he had

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 307, 320; Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 1:398, 400; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 70.

¹² *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:316; Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 1:396; Eckardt, *Gentz: Staatsschriften und Briefe*, 2:289; Kübeck, *Tagebücher*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 302.

¹³ Prokesch, *Zur Geschichte der orientalischen Frage: Briefe aus dem Nachlasse Friedrichs von Gentz*, 173-175.

come to think himself as the personification of the established order, he looked upon revolution, wherever it might occur, as a personal attack upon himself. The outbreak of revolution in Poland, following upon the heels of the events in France and Belgium, made him particularly susceptible to the suggestion that the time had come for the conservative forces of Europe to pool their resources once more against France, the breeder of revolutionary ideas. He was unable, however, to repress a certain *Schadenfreude* at the discomfiture the Poles were causing Russia.¹⁴ Leading advocates of a French war were Alfred Schoenburg, the Austrian representative at Stuttgart, who had come to Vienna to agitate with all his might,¹⁵ and Count Senfft, the Austrian representative at Turin, who was soon recalled because of excessive ultraroyalism and placed in Metternich's intimate circle as an additional plague to Gentz.¹⁶

Gentz made no secret of his disgust at the failure of the die-hards to recognize the fact that Europe was facing "new forms, new combinations, new doctrines," which in some fashion would have to be accepted. To sympathetic friends like the Rothschilds he declared: "There is at this moment *absolutely no political* complication that could not be amicably settled without difficulty. The danger of war lies not in *things*, but in *men*—in the hatred of a few great cabinets toward the system of government produced by the last revolution in France, in the insensate desire of some ministers to display this hatred at every opportunity, in the vain threats, in the publicly advertised preparations for war . . . wherewith one presumes to *impress* or to *frighten* France."¹⁷

Through the extraordinary efficient connections the Rothschilds maintained with the various foreign offices, Gentz sought on his own responsibility to counteract the influence of the Austrian warmongers. He tried particularly to gain the ear of his old friend Louis Philippe. On December 9, for example, after stressing the harm the newspapers were doing by spreading rumors about the increase in armaments, he requested that the matter be called to the attention of Louis Philippe "with all the precautions that the delicacy of my personal position exacts."¹⁸

By the middle of February, although he reasoned to the contrary in

¹⁴ Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 1:407; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:653.

¹⁵ Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 66; Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 1:407-408; *Tagebücher*, 5:239.

¹⁶ *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 1:164-165; Maltzahn to Frederick William III, September 12, 1830, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 81, Wien I, no. 141a, Secret Correspondence; Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 145.

¹⁷ *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 1:108-109, 146-152.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 160-161.

his reports to the Rothschilds, Gentz thought war was unavoidable; and his fears were fully shared by Kübeck, an increasingly influential Austrian official, who viewed affairs in much the same light as Gentz did at this period. Gentz's temper became more and more irascible. He had disputes with Metternich, with Metternich's bride, with Alfred Schoenburg, with Windischgraetz. In Vienna the news was bruited about that Gentz had "become a revolutionary." When Gentz heard that Schoenburg, long an intimate friend, was among those who gave credence to such rumors, he was angry enough to break formally with Viennese society. He invited Schoenburg, along with two "of the best representatives of the Good Cause," Prince Reuss and General Vieth, to hear him explain himself; but whether or not he convinced his friends that he was no revolutionary, it is certain that he did not change his ways. He continued to carry on acrimonious arguments with Metternich, and since he found little sympathy for his own point of view, he became more than ever disgusted with politics. "The old phraseology with which our dispatches are filled irks me more every day," he wrote to Wessenberg. "I wish that we could press forward on a line of independence as much as our position in the middle of the continent allows, and that we bothered much less than heretofore about how the wind blows from Petersburg, Berlin, and even from London. I believe that today we should arrive at a solid basis of peace far more easily and quickly by means of a close and sensible agreement with Paris . . . than by means of all triple, quadruple, and quintuple arrangements."¹⁹

The difficulties between Austria and France were not decreased by the revolutions which in the early part of 1831 broke out in Italy. France, understandably enough, was unwilling for Austria to arrogate to herself the right of regulating Italian affairs forever. By May, however, the relations between the two countries had become less tense. Austrian finances were in no condition to bear the strain of war, and Archduke Carl emerged from his retirement for a brief moment to speak some powerful words for peace. The situation had been materially eased also by the fact that in March, Casimir Périer had become head of the French ministry. As a measure to restore the confidence of the two powers in their mutually pacific intentions, Périer broached the idea of doing something to promote disarmament. Metternich gave the pro-

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 172; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 83-84; Kübeck, *Tagebücher*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 331; *Tagebücher*, 5:268, 271, 274, 280, 289; Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere*, 5:95; Gentz to Schoenburg, March 15, 1831, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, 95; Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 2:14; Fournier, "Gentz," in *Der Friede*, 3:490.

posal an outwardly favorable reception; his plan was that the matter should be taken up when the five powers assembled in a general congress, but at the same time he was actively occupied with negotiations having to do with the coordination of Austrian and South German military forces.²⁰

Gentz, however, was truly anxious that something be done immediately to maintain peace. It was his idea that France and Austria should institute direct negotiations looking to an agreement on disarmament, and he let Périer know through the Rothschilds that if such a proposal came from France he thought Metternich would give it a friendly reception. Before Gentz's letter could have reached Paris, however, an invitation arrived from the French for Austria to participate with the other Great Powers in a disarmament conference at Paris. To Gentz's relief, Metternich, though distrustful, decided to cooperate; but because of jealousy among the other powers, "no center was ever fixed upon and the disarmament negotiations dwindled into generalities." A protocol, finally assented to in October, 1831, stipulated merely that between January 1 and May 1, 1832, the powers should reduce their troops to "the usual peace footing."²¹

Meanwhile Gentz and Metternich continued to quarrel. The zeal of the secret police made Metternich fully cognizant of the broadside of bitter criticism that Gentz was directing against him, and Gentz was eventually brought on the carpet for writing "the most compromising things concerning public affairs." Metternich's wife, who had her finger in everything, complained venomously that she had supposed Gentz was "at least loyal." There were recriminations because Gentz refused to have any part in the preparation of Metternich's autobiography, and because Gentz was supposed to be destroying papers prejudicial to his own reputation. Yet in the midst of this acrimonious domestic atmosphere there were moments of calm, and Metternich, to the amazement of his wife, went to great pains to enlist the king of Prussia and Prince Wittgenstein in an involved and good-natured hoax whereby strange

²⁰ Criste, *Erzherzog Carl*, 3:445-447; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:654-656; Bibl, *Metternich*, 117-119, 123-135, 222; Stern, *Geschichte Europas*, 4:223; Fournier, "Gentz," in *Der Friede*, 3:490; Maltzahn to Frederick William III, May 8, 1832, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 81, Wien I, no. 143a, Secret Correspondence. The reports of Schoenburg from Stuttgart in the first half of 1832 are much taken up with plans for the disposal of the military forces of Baden, Bavaria, Württemberg, and Darmstadt in case war with France should break out. S.A., Vienna, Württemberg, 42.

²¹ *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 1:199-203, 206-208; Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 2:23; *Tagebücher*, 5:158-167; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, p. 351; Charles K. Webster, *Palmerston, Metternich, and the European System, 1830-1841* (London, 1934), 9; Stern, *Geschichte Europas*, 4:224.

things should appear in the Prussian dispatches, for the sole purpose of mystifying Gentz.²²

Gentz, having taken his line, stuck to it. To the sturdy Wessenberg, always a willing listener to criticism of Metternich, he stormed: "Mistrust of everybody, spying on trusted friends, and the opening of all letters without exception has reached a point here which cannot be duplicated in all the history of the secret police. . . . Every expression of opinion that by the widest stretch of the imagination smacks of deviation from the 'correct' is damned and treated with incomparable intolerance. Every day I have to be the unhappy witness to the conversations and diatribes caused by the intercepted letters, in which Count Sedlnitzky and others whom I do not want to name play the chief roles. I myself am frequently charged with lax purism and too much independence, though not yet (like you) with pronounced liberalism; but I am so little bothered by these accusations that I never suppress a truth, or what I believe to be a truth, and I often get involved in the most furious debates with the prince personally."²³

The record shows that these assertions were not exaggerated. Of Metternich's Italian policy Gentz was a sharp critic. He hoped that the powers would insist on the restoration to the Poles of the constitution granted them in 1815! He supported Wessenberg and Esterhazy, who had made themselves very unpopular in Vienna because of the way they had conducted the Austrian end of the negotiation at London on the Belgian situation. He combated the devious course that Metternich was pursuing in Germany, where the ground was being prepared for a further extension of the Karlsbad decrees. Gentz could find no hope in additional measures against representative constitutions and freedom of the press in Germany. The policy that Austria should undertake, he declared, was a policy that would improve conditions among the common people.²⁴

This sudden interest in the general welfare was the outgrowth of fear that a social conflict was impending: "The possibility of an uprising of the lower classes against the upper classes, of the poor against the rich, that is the danger which hovers over us," he wrote in Janu-

²² Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere*, 5:97, 101-105, 111, 223, 226-227; Prokesch *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 1:409-410; Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Gentz*, 2:320; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 84; *Tagebücher*, 5:275, 289, 301, 334, 339.

²³ Fournier, "Gentz," in *Der Friede*, 3:514.

²⁴ Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 2:24; *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 2:229-230; Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 138-140; Fournier, *Studien und Skizzen*, 3:242-262; *Tagebücher*, 5:334; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 118-119; Bibl, *Metternich*, 144-156.

ary, 1832. His criticism of Metternich became sharper than ever: "Were I to write the history of the last fifteen years, it would be a continuous accusation of Metternich," he told Prokesch. Metternich on his part, without being so harsh, made no secret of the displeasure Gentz's conduct gave him.²⁵

The constant verbal skirmishing, combined with the long emotional excitement aroused by Fanny Elssler, began to take heavy toll of the sixty-seven-year-old man. The long exaltation accompanying the early stages of his love affair gave way to moods of profound depression, particularly during Fanny's absences from Vienna. A growing dissatisfaction with himself and with the world foretold the end.²⁶

On April 4, 1832, he informed Prokesch: "For several weeks I have been definitely sick. . . . A general ailment has spread over my whole system." And a month later: "I suffer from no particular complaint, from nothing painful or dangerous. A great deal of weakness and discomfort, along with absolute repugnance toward all food and an unnatural inclination to sleep, have since the middle of March so depressed my physical and mental energy that I lack zest and delight in everything."²⁷

His friends were in despair, as helplessly they watched the end approach. The diary of Melanie Metternich for June 8 tells its own story: "Herr Frank, the doctor who is treating Gentz, was at our house. He complained very much over the fact that his patient would no longer take the prescribed medicine, and he added that he would stake his life on saving our old friend, if he would only do as he was told. He urged me to write him and beg him to take proper care of himself. I did this, and Clemens also visited him, but found him very weak and much worse than when he had last seen him. I believe that they treated him badly at the beginning of his sickness." The very next morning around nine o'clock, at about the hour when he had been accustomed to set forth for the Ballplatz, Gentz died. It was the ninth day of June, 1832.²⁸

"Gott! Give me the strength to bear this!" exclaimed the grief-stricken Fanny Elssler, and when Prokesch, who was out of the city, returned, she fell weeping in his arms. It was noted at the theater that she danced the "Carnival of Venice" with a "certain expression of sorrow."²⁹

²⁵ *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 1:265; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 110, 123, 125.

²⁶ Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 145; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:216, 218.

²⁷ Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 2:98; Eckardt, *Gentz: Staatsschriften und Briefe*, 2:302-303.

²⁸ Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere*, 5:231-232.

²⁹ Eckardt, *Gentz: Staatsschriften und Briefe*, 2:305-306; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 159.

Metternich wandered restlessly through the stately rooms of his mansion and talked constantly of the death which was removing, one by one, the men who had made life pleasant for him. He felt terribly alone. In the morning he jumped up hurriedly from the breakfast table, where the lively conversation of Gentz, even in his more argumentative moods, was sorely missed.³⁰

But when he came to give an account of his old friend's demise, Metternich assumed the measured and benignly pontifical tones of the Austrian chancellor. To Prokesch he wrote: "His real ailment was a complete exhaustion of vitality. The oil was dried up, and the comparison attains added aptness from the fact that the great irritability of his nervous system for the past eighteen months is to be ascribed to the same condition. . . . Finally about six weeks ago the decisive symptom manifested itself in Gentz: on a day when he was particularly depressed, he confided to Count Muench that his feelings for Fanny were completely extinguished! 'The good child,' he added, 'does everything possible; she tries to cheer me up, but it does no good; here,' and he pointed to his heart, 'her image has vanished.' When Muench told me this anecdote, I informed the doctors that the end was near at hand, and my prognosis has been verified all too soon. . . .

"*Change* in men is always a bad sign," Metternich continued, remembering smugly no doubt that he himself, like his eternal principles, never changed. "You have not known Gentz so long as I have known him. Our intimacy encompasses almost thirty years. I have had full opportunity to observe his life in its various stages. Gentz was the man who stood farthest removed from every sort of romanticism. Five or six years ago a kind of romanticism awakened within him; since his acquaintanceship with Fanny it developed to a high degree. Romantic love in old men soon uses up the spirit and brings on the end.

"An unusual range of the most exceptional talents, real genius, lies buried with the deceased. The place that he occupied cannot be filled again, and although Gentz for the past two years only performed chimerical duties for me, I am going to miss him tremendously."³¹

Gentz left no estate, only debts; and Metternich had to pay for his tombstone in the Protestant cemetery.³² They named a street for him, a somewhat sad street, cutting between drab buildings of Vienna. A more

³⁰ Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere*, 5:233.

³¹ Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 2:118-119.

³² Eckardt, *Gentz: Staatsschriften und Briefe*, 2:309; Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere*, 5:232.

pretentious thoroughfare, named for Metternich, runs parallel a block away.

Fame has dealt with Gentz as it does with political personalities of the second rank. He haunts the pages of the historical treatises, and his figure, once so vibrant and magnetic, so full-blooded and human, lingers haltingly, as though unwilling to join the host on the road to oblivion. But his name gradually fades from the memories of men.

**BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE
AND INDEX**

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

An elaborate bibliography on Friedrich Gentz was published in 1906 by F. M. Kircheisen, "Die Schriften von und über Friedrich von Gentz: Eine bibliographische Übersicht," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für oesterreichische Geschichtsforschung*, vol. 27. Kircheisen's was an impressive performance, running to nearly fifty pages, but like all bibliographies it was incomplete. A supplement to Kircheisen was immediately compiled by an outstanding authority on Gentz, Friedrich C. Wittichen, "Zur Gentz-Bibliographie," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für oesterreichische Geschichtsforschung*, vol. 27 (1906). When Kurt Groba published his fine essay on Gentz in the second volume of *Schlesische Lebensbilder* (Breslau, 1926), he sought to bring the bibliographical work of Kircheisen and Wittichen up to date. Since these earlier compilations may be found in any first-rate library, and since I have sought to indicate my own indebtedness through the footnotes, I limit myself here to a supplementary note. Some items had escaped even the diligent Wittichen, and the bibliography by Groba has many omissions. The same is doubtless true of the supplement here given.

MANUSCRIPT MATERIALS

To catalogue all the unpublished Gentz manuscripts would require more erudition than the writer possesses. It is doubtful whether such an attempt would be worth the required time and energy. Several generations of scholars have ransacked the various European archives for Gentz manuscripts, and most of the documents that have any considerable historical or biographical importance have already been published. The investigator of the present day must content himself mainly with what has been culled over. The footnotes will indicate where my own indebtedness lies with regard to manuscript sources as well as printed materials.

Das Geheime Staatsarchiv at Berlin-Dahlem contains, besides the usual odds and ends, Gentz's correspondence with Froelich and with Lucchesini. His correspondence with Goetzen has been transferred to the Kriegsarchiv in Potsdam. These materials have long been known to historians. In the Staatsbibliothek at Berlin are a few letters to various persons, but of most value are the Varnhagen papers, which contain some documents on Gentz's personal affairs heretofore unpublished.

The chief repository for unpublished Gentz manuscripts is the Haus-, Hof- und Staats-Archiv in Vienna. Here are to be found a number of documents, relating, in the main, to the last ten years of Gentz's official activity.

The Public Record Office in London also contains a considerable number

of Gentz manuscripts, most of which have been published or used by scholars. In the British Museum the number of manuscripts is far less, but a few of them are of real interest and, so far as I know, have not been used before.

In all the archives there are certainly some documents, hidden away in unlikely places, which will from time to time come to light. As the papers of private families are opened to students, still other manuscripts will appear. Thus the papers of Lord Stuart de Rothesay, in the collection of Mr. André de Coppet of New York, contain Gentz documents of interest.

Gentz manuscripts have been found in France, Sweden, Russia, Switzerland, and Poland, but since it has been impossible for me to visit the archives of these countries, I do not know whether they contain documents of great importance in addition to those already published. On the whole the possibility seems slight.

PUBLISHED WORKS CONTAINING WRITINGS BY GENTZ

The main body of Gentz's writings will be found in the works that appear in the bibliographies of Kircheisen, F. C. Wittichen, and Groba. But there are others that should be mentioned. The famous Prussian archivist, Paul Bailieu, rounded out the story of Gentz's removal from Berlin with the publication of pertinent documents in an article entitled "Zur Verabschiedung des Kriegsrats Gentz, 1802," in *Festschrift zu Gustav Schmollers 70. Geburtstag* (Leipzig, 1908).

Gentz's relations to England during the Napoleonic period have been further illuminated by two publications of the Historical Manuscripts Commission: *The Manuscripts of J. B. Fortescue, Esq., Preserved at Dropmore*, edited by W. Fitz Patrick (10 vols., London, 1892-1927), and Francis L. Bickley, ed., *Report on the Manuscripts of Earl Bathurst Preserved at Circencester Park* (London, 1923). In more recent years C. S. B. Buckland of the Public Record Office has carried forward the study of Gentz's relations with England. In his publication of Gentz's *Mémoire sur la paix maritime of March, 1810* (Oxford, 1931) and "Letters from Gentz and Others in Vienna to the Hon. H. M. Pierrepont, 1803-1806," in the *English Historical Review*, vol. 53 (1938), Dr. Buckland published manuscripts that were hitherto unknown. His monograph *Friedrich von Gentz' Relations with the British Government during the Marquis Wellesley's Foreign Secretaryship, 1809-1812* (London, 1933) is also of primary importance. The book is based almost entirely on manuscript sources, previously unutilized, which are copiously quoted, and is a model of exact scholarship. Letters of real biographical value from Gentz to the Swiss *émigré* in England, Francis D'Ivernois, were published by Otto Karmin in his "Lettres inédites de Frédéric Gentz à Sir Francis D'Ivernois, 1798-1803," in the *Revue historique de la Révolution française et de l'Empire*, vol. 4 (1913).

Many documents in French from the Czartoryski archives are to be found

in Emila Kipe, *Fryderyk Gentz a Polska, 1794-1831* (Cracow and Warsaw, 1911), a work of capital importance, particularly for the years 1802-05. A few excerpts from Gentz's letters during these years are to be found in A. Maggiolo, *Pozzo di Borgo, 1764-1842* (Paris, 1890), and in A. Wassiltchikow, *Les Razoumowski*, vol. 2, pt. 4 (Halle, 1893).

The letters from Gentz to Stein are now to be consulted in *Freiherr vom Stein: Briefwechsel, Denkschriften, und Aufzeichnungen*, edited by Erich Botzenhart (7 vols., Berlin, 1931-37). Oskar Criste has printed some communications from Gentz to Liechtenstein in his biography of *Feldmarschall Johannes Fürst von Liechtenstein* (Vienna, 1905). To the long list of articles and books based on new Gentz documents, which the distinguished August Fournier published over a period of forty years, must be added: "Oesterreich am Vorabend der Befreiungskriege," in the *Oesterreichische Rundschau*, vol. 34 (1913); "Gentz und Bellio," in the *Deutsche Revue*, 37th year (1912); volumes 2 and 3 of *Historische Studien und Skizzen* (3 vols., Vienna and Leipzig, 1908-12); and "Gentz der Reaktionär," in *Der Friede*, vol. 3 (1919).

Hitherto unpublished documents for the period after 1815 may be found in Ernst Salzer, "Ein Fragment aus Gentz' Tagebüchern," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für oesterreichische Geschichtsforschung*, vol. 31 (1912); J. Krauter, *Franz Freiherr von Ottenfels: Beiträge zur Politik Metternichs im griechischen Freiheitskampfe* (Salzburg, 1913); *The Diary and Correspondence of Henry Wellesley, First Lord Cowley, 1790-1846*, edited by F. A. Wellesley (London, 1930); Paul R. Sweet, "Four Letters from Gentz," in the *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 7 (1935); and Leo Grünstein, *Das Alt-Wiener Antlitz: Bildnisse und Menschen aus der ersten Hälfte des XIX. Jahrhunderts* (2 vols., Vienna, 1931).

Letters from Gentz to Fanny Elssler were published in Bettelheim-Gabillon, ed., *Betty Paolis Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Vienna, 1908).

In the Columbia University Library may be seen Gentz's *The Origin and Principles of the American Revolution Compared with the Origin and Principles of the French Revolution*, translated from the German of Gentz by "an American gentleman [John Quincy Adams]" (Philadelphia, 1800).

BOOKS CONTAINING CONTEMPORARY COMMENTS

A few works contain noteworthy references to Gentz during his years in Berlin. *The Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, edited by Charles Francis Adams (12 vols., Philadelphia, 1874-77), reveal Adams' considerable interest in Gentz's writings and suggests that the two men may have been personally acquainted. The still unpublished portions of Adams' diaries will undoubtedly clarify the matter when they can be consulted. J. Fürst, ed., *Henriette Herz: Ihr Leben und ihre Erinnerungen* (Berlin, 1850) and Ludmilla Assing, ed., *Briefe von Chamisso, Gneisenau, Haugwitz, W. von*

Humboldt, Prince Louis Ferdinand, Rahel, Rückert, L. Tieck, u. a., aus dem Nachlass Varnhagen's von Ense (2 vols., Leipzig, 1867) are valuable for the light they throw on a period of Gentz's career about which there is little information. For Gentz's relations with Schiller and Goethe and their opinion of him, see *Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe* (London, 1877) and Albert Leitzmann, ed., "Ein Empfehlungsbrief von W. von Humboldt an Schiller für Gentz," in *Festschrift: Alex. Cartellieri* (Weimar, 1927). An able rejoinder to one of Gentz's articles is the anonymous pamphlet *Über den Sinn für historische Wahrheit und über einen Aufsatz in dem historischen Journal des Herrn Kriegs Rath Gentz die Ermordung der französischen Gesandten betreffend* (Gotha, 1799).

For Gentz's years in Vienna through 1815 a number of important works may be cited. Among the popular works which are informative and entertaining are Hans Wahl, ed., *Prinz Louis Ferdinand von Preussen: Ein Bild seines Lebens in Briefen, Tagebuchblättern und Zeitgenössischen Zeugnissen* (Weimar, 1917), and Augusta Weldler-Steinberg, ed., *Rahel Varnhagen: Ein Frauenleben in Briefen* (Potsdam, 1925). "Heinrich Joseph Collin und sein Kreis," edited by Max Lederer, in the *Archiv für oesterreichische Geschichte*, vol. 109 (1921), throws much light on Gentz's troubles with the Austrian police at a critical period in his life. *Lettres inédites de Napoléon I^{er}*, edited by Léon Lecestre (2 vols., Paris, 1897), and Jean Mistler, *Madame de Staël et Maurice O'Donnell, 1805-1817* (Paris, 1926) contain valuable information on the same period. New information on Gentz at the Congress of Vienna was made available with the publication of *Carl Bertuch's Tagebuch vom Wiener Kongress*, edited by Hermann Freiherr von Egloffstein (Berlin, 1916), and Carl August Endler, ed., *Der deutsche Gedanke bei den mecklenburgischen Verwandten der Königin Luise* (Leipzig, 1932). Scattered references to Gentz, some of them of considerable interest, appear in *Briefe des Dichters Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werner*, edited by Oswald Floeck (2 vols., Munich 1914); Hans von Krosigk, *Karl Graf von Brühl* (Berlin, 1910); Lewis Melville, *The Life and Letters of William Cobbett in England and America* (2 vols., London, 1913); *Wilhelm von Humboldts politische Briefe*, edited by Wilhelm Richter (2 vols., Berlin and Leipzig, 1935-36); and *Friedrich Schlegel's Briefe an seinem Bruder August Wilhelm*, edited by O. F. Walzel (Berlin, 1890).

A source of first-rate importance for the last years of Gentz's life is *Aus den Tagebüchern des Grafen Prokesch von Osten*, edited by Anton Count Prokesch von Osten (Vienna, 1909). Less important, but interesting, are Franz Freiherr von Andlaw's *Erinnerungsblätter aus den Papieren eines Diplomaten* (Frankfurt, 1857), and his *Mein Tagebuch: Auszüge aus Aufschreibungen der Jahren 1811 bis 1861* (Frankfort, 1862). Also to be mentioned for the years after 1815 are *The Memoirs of François René Vicomte de Chateaubriand*, translated by A. T. de Mattos (6 vols., London, 1902);

The Diary of Philipp von Neumann, 1819-1850, translated and edited by E. Beresford Chancellor (2 vols., Boston and New York, 1928); and Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhailovitch, ed., *Les Rapports diplomatiques de Lebzeltern, ministre d'Autriche à la cour de Russie, 1816-1828* (St. Petersburg, 1913). Charles K. Webster's *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, 1812-1822* (2 vols., London, 1925-1931) and his *Britain and the Independence of Latin America, 1812-1830* (2 vols., London, 1938) not only contain comments on Gentz by contemporaries but are indispensable to any student of the period.

SECONDARY WORKS ON GENTZ

Adrien Robinet de Clery, *Les Idées politiques de Frédéric de Gentz* (Lausanne, 1917), and Johann Albrecht Rantzau, "Friedrich von Gentz und die Politik," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für oesterreichische Geschichtsforschung*, vol. 43 (1929), are both good.

Paul F. Reiff, *Friedrich Gentz: An Opponent of the French Revolution and Napoleon* (Urbana, 1912), is an able monograph on Gentz's early career, based on the printed materials. The best of the recent German doctoral dissertations is Walter Rasemann, *Die rationalen und traditionellen Elemente in der Publizistik des Friedrich von Gentz* (Düsseldorf, 1935). Georg Schwalm's *Studien zu Friedrich von Gentz* (Gelnhausen, 1930) is of little value.

On Gentz's relations with the Danubian Principalities may be cited Nicolas G. Alexandresco, *La Correspondance du chevalier Frédéric de Gentz avec le prince de Valachie, Jean Caradja, et la question d'Orient* (Paris, 1895) and Paul R. Sweet, *Friedrich von Gentz and the Danubian Principalities* (Birmingham-Southern College Bulletin, Birmingham, Alabama, 1935).

An item that I have been unable to examine is Ernst Lissauer, "Zum Bilde Friedrichs von Gentz," in the *Schlesische Monatshefte* (1932). H. M. Peterssen, "Der Schriftsteller Friedrich Gentz," in the *Deutsche Rundschau* (1939), contributes nothing new.

Of outstanding value are Joseph Karl Mayr's two monographs: *Geschichte der oesterreichischen Staatskanzlei im Zeitalter des Fürsten Metternich* (Vienna, 1935) and *Metternichs geheimer Briefdienst, Postlogen, und Postkurse* (Vienna, 1935). These works, which compress much information into short compass, are based on an unrivaled knowledge of the archival materials in Vienna.

An exhaustive and exceedingly useful study, which was written many years before it was published, is Otto Tschirch's *Geschichte der öffentlichen Meinung in Preussen vom Baseler Frieden bis zum Zusammenbruch des Staates, 1795-1806* (2 vols., Weimar, 1934). Tschirch's bibliographical apparatus is very much out of date. Valuable for Gentz's first years in Vienna is Louis Wittmer's "Le Prince de Ligne, Jean de Müller, Frédéric de Gentz, et l'Autriche," in *Annales Prince de Ligne*, vols. 5 and 6 (1924-25).

The development of Gentz's political thought under the impact of the French Revolution is well treated in George P. Gooch, *Germany and the French Revolution* (2d ed., London, 1927); Friede Braune, *Burke in Deutschland* (Heidelberg, 1917); and Reinhold Aris, *History of Political Thought in Germany from 1789 to 1815* (London, 1936).

The sketch of Gentz in W. P. Cresson's *Diplomatic Portraits* (New York, 1923) is superficial.

BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL ON GENTZ'S CONTEMPORARIES

On Gentz's brother and brother-in-law, both architects of note, there are two sumptuous volumes: Adolph Doebber, *Heinrich Gentz, ein Berliner Baumeister um 1800* (Berlin, 1916), and Alste Oncken, *Friedrich Gilly, 1772-1800* (Berlin, 1936). On Gentz's father the most valuable source of information is Friedrich Freiherr von Schoetter, *Das preussische Münzwesen im achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (6 vols., Berlin, 1904-11).

It need scarcely be said that the work on Metternich that overshadows all others is Heinrich Ritter von Srbik, *Metternich: Der Staatsmann und der Mensch* (2 vols., Munich, 1925). H. du Coudray, *Metternich* (New Haven, 1936), is the best life in English. Of great value for the years around 1830 is Viktor Bibl, *Metternich in neuer Beleuchtung* (Vienna, 1928). C. S. B. Buckland, *Metternich and the British Government from 1809 to 1813* (London, 1932), is an authoritative monograph based on British manuscript sources. A work of some merit is Emil Lauber, *Metternichs Kampf um die europäische Mitte: Struktur seiner Politik von 1809 bis 1815* (Vienna and Leipzig, 1939). It came into my hands too late for me to use it.

On Adam Müller there is the uncritical but thorough work by Jakob Baxa, *Adam Müller: Ein Lebensbild aus dem Befreiungskriegen und aus der deutschen Restauration* (Jena, 1930). Also to be consulted now is Louis Sauzin, *Adam-Heinrich Müller: sa vie et son oeuvre* (Paris, 1937). Alexander Dombrowsky, *Aus einer Biographie Adam Müllers* (Göttingen, 1911), is valuable for the critical work on the Gentz-Müller correspondence.

The standard work for the life of Johannes von Müller is Karl Henking's *Johannes von Müller* (2 vols., Stuttgart, 1909-28), which carries the story down to the year 1804. Of greater value for its bearing on Gentz's biography is Willy Andreas' article "Johannes von Müller in Weimar," in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 145 (1931).

The literature on Wilhelm von Humboldt is voluminous. Particularly useful for studying the influence of Humboldt on Gentz are the following: Albert Leitzmann, ed., "Politische Jugendbriefe Wilhelm von Humboldts an Gentz," in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 152 (1935); *Wilhelm von Humboldt: Eine Auswahl aus seinen politischen Schriften*, edited by Siegfried Kähler (Berlin, 1922).

Oskar Criste, *Erzherzog Carl von Oesterreich* (3 vols., Vienna and Leip-

zig, 1912), is one of the best biographies for the period. It is a well-grounded defense of the archduke based on the sources. Gerhard Ritter, *Stein: Eine politische Biographie* (2 vols., Stuttgart and Berlin, 1931), gives the most modern full-length treatment of the great German patriot. Léonce Pingaud, *Un Agent secret sous la Révolution et l'Empire: le comte d'Antraigues* (Paris, 1893), is unsurpassed for its picture of diplomatic intrigue in the Napoleonic period. Otto Karmin, *Sir Francis D'Ivernois, 1757-1842: sa vie, son oeuvre, et son temps* (Geneva, 1920), is an authoritative biography of the émigré publicist. Gertrude Aretz, *Queen Louise of Prussia* (New York and London, 1929), and Viktor Bibl, *Kaiser Franz: Der letzte römisch-deutsche Kaiser* (Leipzig and Vienna, 1938), are informative and interesting.

Useful biographies of women who figure in Gentz's life are August Ehrhard, *Fanny Elssler: Das Leben einer Tänzerin*, German edition by Moritz Necker (Munich, 1910), and Hedwig von Olfers, *Ein Lebenslauf*, vol. 1 (Berlin, 1908). Margarete von Olfers, *Elisabeth von Stägemann: Lebensbild einer deutschen Frau, 1761-1835* (Leipzig, 1937), contributes nothing new.

On the Rothschilds two volumes are available: Count Egon Caesar Corti's *The Rise of the House of Rothschild* and his *The Reign of the House of Rothschild*, translated by Brian and Beatrix Lunn (New York, 1928). Uncritical, unreflective, poorly written, Corti's work is nevertheless indispensable because of his diligent labor in manuscript sources. Friedrich Engel-Janosi, "Die Jugend des Grafen Anton Prokesch-Osten," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, vol. 49 (1935), and Erwin Hölzle, "Cotta, der Verleger, und die Politik," in the *Historische Vierteljahrschrift*, vol. 39 (1935), are competent biographical articles on men with whom Gentz was associated in his latter years. Friedrich Engel-Janosi, *Jugendzeit des Grafen Prokesch von Osten* (Innsbruck, 1938), makes full use for the first time of the Prokesch papers. Unfortunately it came to my attention too late for me to use it.

Another list of general works and monographs on the period of Gentz's life seems unnecessary here. I trust that my own great indebtedness to many writers has been amply indicated in the footnotes. Two of these writers, who appear infrequently in the citations, first aroused my serious interest, through their works, in this period in the history of the German people. These men are Friedrich Meinecke and Franz Schnabel.

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